

**Disarm Authority!  
Arm Your Desires!**

**C.A.L. Press**  
POB 1446  
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Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

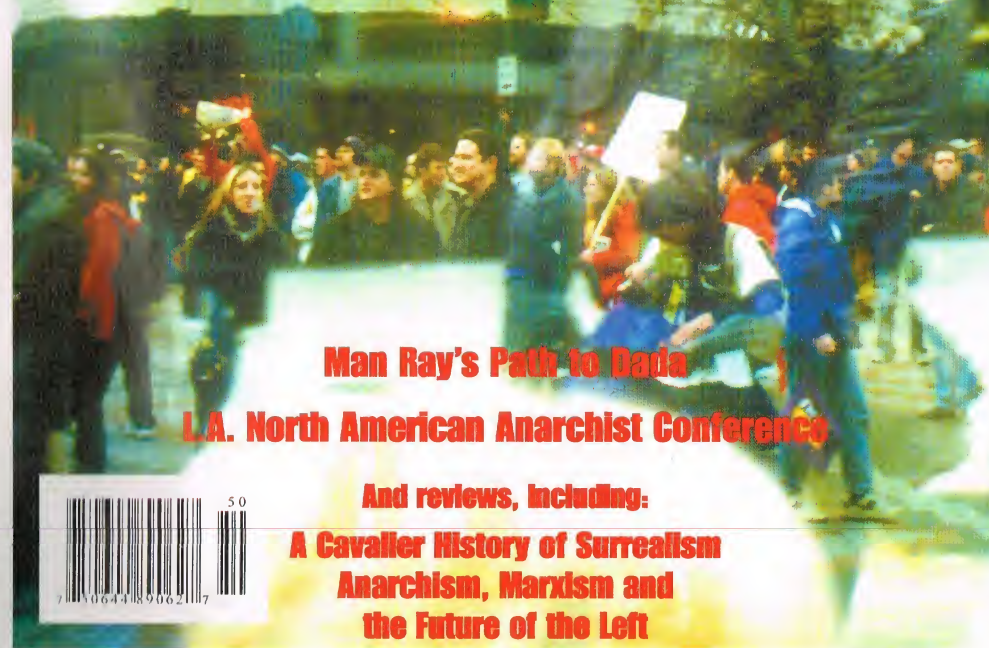
#50/Fall-Winter 2000-2001  
Vol. 18, No.2

\$4.95  
\$5.95 Canada

# Anarchy

**A Journal of Desire Armed**

**Seattle, Philadelphia,  
Los Angeles, Prague....**



**Man Ray's Path to Dada**

**L.A. North American Anarchist Conference**

**And reviews, including:  
A Cavalier History of Surrealism  
Anarchism, Marxism and  
the Future of the Left**



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## From Seattle to Prague and Beyond!

**T**he events of the last year have changed the face of the contemporary political spectrum. For the first time since early in the last century anarchists are beginning to be heard and taken seriously by large numbers of people around the world. Of course, most mainstream media attention is still devoted to denouncing, dismissing or belittling anarchist ideas and actions. This is only to be expected when huge

corporations control the vast majority of communications over entire continents. What is really new is that anarchist resistance has grown and become so vocal that it can no longer be ignored as it has been since the '60s. (And even in the turbulence of the late 1960s, although anarchists got some attention—especially within the anti-war movement, anarchists were so few in number and often so inarticulate that they had a minimal impact on events.)

With the growth and rising militance of the global anti-globalization movement in Seattle, Davos, Washington D.C., Melbourne, and now Prague, it has become clear that there is an increasingly significant number of anarchists involved in all of the most crucial areas of this resistance. Libertarian forms of organization have achieved widespread acceptance within this resistance. Anarchist goals—the destruction of neoliberal institutions, along with the destruction of capitalism and the state—are becoming increasingly visible and gaining adherents. And a clear majority of the most militant participants around the world appear to be anarchists.

Yet it is precisely at this time that many leftists have begun calling for the abandonment, or at least a significant slowdown, of the now frequent, international mass-mobilizations confronting neoliberal institutions around the world. The major arguments for slowing down or abandoning this, so far, very fruitful strategy are several. They include criticisms that (1) mobilizing masses of people so frequently in different locations is elitist, can't be sustained and will lead to burn-out; that (2) mobilizing for mass confrontations with neoliberal institutions means neglecting local and regional organizing at home; that (3) as these confrontations with global capitalist institutions continue the level of repression will escalate to the point where the costs of resistance outweigh the benefits; and that (4) radical goals of abolishing capitalism and the state outright are being lost amid the many more limited calls for "fair trade" within capitalism and defenses of national sovereignty against globalist capitalism.

As with any statements about huge, complex social movements there will usually be some grain of truth within any criticisms that might be made. However, the overriding agenda hidden behind these current criticisms would appear to quite possibly be an increasing fear that the traditional ideologies, organizational forms and leaderships of the left are being *left behind*. In effect, the anti-globalization movement is being not so subtly asked to subordinate itself to those who want to channel the movement in their own preferred directions. Thus the spontaneity of—and libertarian organizational forms taken by—anti-globalization resistance are not just a threat to, but a negation of, the leadership hierarchies of traditional leftist organizations. The free-for-all contest of diverse groups working, more or less,

together against globalist neo-liberalism—without the burden of any hegemonic theoretical or ideological goals—eschews the heretofore almost inescapable least common-denominator orientation of mobilizations of mass resistance (in North America, especially). While the diverse tactics of confrontation—from nonviolent resistance to creative symbolic actions to active and directly physical attacks—resist any easy, premature interpretation of the resistance, leaving it open to many levels of participation.

So, it might be true that (1) mobilizing masses of people so frequently in different locations could be elitist, unsustainable, and likely to lead to burn-out of activists if the same small group of people were required to organize and turn out for each event. However, one of the biggest strengths of anti-globalization resistance has been the incorporation of ever more new participants from around the world. The fact that the largest mobilizations have been organized in different places each time has meant that local radicals in each region have had the valuable opportunity to participate intimately in their planning, organizing and realization, while any radicals unable or uninterested in travelling to the primary sites of confrontation have had multiple opportunities to either participate in or organize a multitude of satellite protests around the globe.

It might be true that (2) mobilizing for mass confrontations with neoliberal institutions could mean neglecting local and regional organizing at home if the mobilizations were the only activities in which participants engaged. However, a closer look at the actual activities of participating radicals would reveal that many are already heavily involved in local interventions on their home turf. And many of the rest wouldn't be interested in traditional leftist organizing even if they didn't participate in anti-globalization events. The biggest problem for the critics here seems to be that those radicals who are involved in local interventions *aren't* doing the type of traditional leftist organizing the critics prefer.

It also might be true that (3) as these confrontations with global capitalist institutions continue the level of repression will escalate. This should be expected. Whenever the business-as-usual of capital and state are genuinely threatened we should expect attacks on radicals to escalate. However, this is primarily an argument for constantly inventing new and more creative forms, methods and means of targeting those we are confronting, not of abandoning confrontation merely to avoid repression.

And, finally, it appears patently untrue that (4) radical goals of abolishing capitalism and the state outright are being lost amid the more limited calls for "fair trade" within capitalism and defenses of national sovereignty against globalist capitalism. In fact, many more people have now actually *heard* these radical demands raised, than would have ever noticed them hidden in the programs and theoretical publications of formal leftist organizations—whose actual practices have generally been at odds with these goals anyway.

A year ago it was Seattle! Yesterday it was Prague! Tomorrow, the resistance to capital and state is coming to a city near you!

—Jason McQuinn



## Discontents



Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc in Washington, D.C. for A16.

### Essays

#### 36 My Date with the North American Anarchist Conference

BY LAWRENCE JARACH

#### 42 Anarchist Publishing & Distribution: Interview with the AK Collective

BY JASON MCQUINN

#### 51 Man Ray's Path to Dada

BY ALLAN ANTUFF

#### 57 Tango: The Passionate Music

BY MANOLO GONZALEZ

#### 61 Sidebar: Music for Late Nights in the City

#### 65 An Anarchy Reader Survey

### Departments

#### Openers

- 2 From Seattle to Prague and Beyond!
- 5 Inside Anarchy

#### The Sad Truth

- 8 Revolution in Yugoslavia—Who Won?
- 9 Amsterdam Squatters Evicted by Riot Cops

#### Alternative Media Review

- 10 A Cavalier History of Surrealism
- 12 The Anarchist Tension
- 13 Anarchism and American Traditions
- 14 Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left
- 20 Anarchist Press Review
- 21 Anarchist/Alternative Web Sites

#### International Anarchist News

- 22 Montreal Anarchist Demo Suppressed with 157 Arrests
- 26 Irish Eyewitness Report on the S26 Demonstration in Prague
- 32 Anarchist Rebels in Uganda?

#### 68-80 Letters

Seattle N30 cover photos: Hans Bennett

## Anarchy #50

Fall/Winter 2000-2001

Press run: 6,000  
ISSN 1044-1387  
LC 88-13329  
OCLC 11733794  
Printed in USA

PUBLISHED BY  
C.A.L. Press

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Special thanks to A. Hacker.

The views expressed in the articles, graphics, letters, etc. published in *Anarchy* do not necessarily reflect the views of C.A.L., or the editorial & production staff.

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"The whirligig of time has its revenges."  
—B.A.G. Fuller



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\$24.00/four issues by 1st Class mail in the U.S./\$36.00 Library 1st Class  
\$24.00/four issues by Surface Mail outside the U.S.  
\$36.00/four issues by Airmail outside the U.S.  
All single copy orders & subscriptions are delivered in plain envelopes.

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### Submissions

Please enclose an adequate self-addressed, stamped envelope with all articles, stories, photos, and graphic art if you wish to have them returned, or a 33c SASE if you want to receive a reply (or 2 IRCs for foreign addresses). Anything sent without a return SASE becomes the property of C.A.L. Press. All submissions should be typed & double-spaced if at all possible. We prefer electronic submissions (by e-mail) or on IBM compatible or Macintosh format 3.5" diskettes in ASCII text, Wordperfect or Word.

Short news and comment articles or reviews which are used in "Openers," "The Sad Truth," "Alternative Media Review" or "International Anarchist News" may be edited for brevity and style. Other submissions (features) will be significantly edited only with the author's permission. *Anarchy* editors reserve the power to make editorial comments, to run introductions or responses, to classify articles, to respond to letters, and to place sidebars wherever deemed appropriate. Until we can afford to remunerate authors, photographers, and graphic artists for their published contributions we will give free issues &/or subscriptions, or other appropriate tokens of our appreciation.

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## Openers

# Inside Anarchy

Not just another issue, this is *Anarchy* number 50! Published since 1980, *Anarchy* has outlasted hundreds of other anarchist periodicals, organizations and federations in the last twenty years. Why? While paying respect to history (especially to the manifold lost histories of resistance), *Anarchy* has always emphasized the living, passionate and exciting elements of the anarchist tradition and present. While others attempt to preserve the dogmas of yesterday, *Anarchy* remains committed to reflecting and enlarging anarchist resistance to capital and the state here and now!

This issue celebrates the ongoing expansion of anarchist resistance internationally with coverage of the recent S26 anti-IMF/World Bank demonstrations in Prague in the Czech Republic. It also includes a detailed description of the repression of an anarchist demo last spring in Montreal, and an exchange of messages about what may be an anarchist rebel group operating in Uganda. However, with the increasing amount of resistance around the globe right now, along with the expanding effectiveness of radical communications, there are many important events not covered in this issue simply due to lack of space. In order to cover more of these important events in the next issue, we may need to enlarge the "International Anarchist News" section of the magazine in the future. (Let us know what you think by sending in the *Anarchy* Reader Survey on page 65.)

This issue features Lawrence Jarach's report on his hopeful experiences at the North American Anarchist Conference that took place this last August in Los Angeles (immediately before the protests at the Democratic Convention there), my interview with the AK Collective about its increasingly important publishing and distribution activities, Allan Antill's historical account of artist & photographer "Man Ray's Path to Dada," and Manolo Gonzalez's nostalgic look at the history of Tango in relation to the Argentine anarchist milieu. But, as usual, that's not anywhere near all you'll find in these pages!

For those wishing to contact this magazine electronically, please remember that the e-mail address changed earlier this year. It is now: jmcquinn@coin.org (and the old address no longer works).



Anarchist cheerleaders in action at A16 in Washington, D.C.

Unfortunately, work has gone very slowly on developing the new *Anarchy* magazine web site. However, at this point we hope to get a site off the ground before the next issue appears in March, 2001. The most likely address will be [www.anarchymag.org](http://www.anarchymag.org) for those interested in locating the site as soon as it appears.

Don't forget that C.A.L. Press is still offering copies of the excellent Seattle protest video *RIP WTO N30* for sale at \$10 postpaid (or free with new 8-issue subscriptions or 8-issue subscription extensions—as an alternate choice to Bob Black's *Anarchy after Leftism* book). If you didn't make it to Seattle but want to experience some of the atmosphere amongst the protesters in the streets, this video remains a must see.

The fund drive for *Anarchy* magazine continues to move along at little more than a crawling pace. Whether or not we reach our goal of \$13,000 (not likely!), the fund drive will expire as originally scheduled—just before the next issue appears. Until then, we'll continue with one last urgent request for support from all those in a position to help who believe this magazine is an important project worth maintaining.

I'd like to remind you one last time that you won't likely find any other anarchist

periodical project consistently reaching as many people inside and outside of the anarchist milieu as this one. It isn't just a coincidence that *Anarchy* is available in nearly a thousand newsstands and book shops across the continent (along with a few in Europe). It should be obvious by now that not many radical magazines make it in the super-commodified "media market," saturated as it is with glossy and colorful cotton-candy journalism, which makes this magazine one of the very few radical alternatives readily available to millions of potential non-anarchist readers.

And once again, for those who have been asking about the C.A.L. Press book project, plans for publication of our next book have suffered from a severe lack of cash. At this point it remains to be seen if we can get our next title out before the Spring/Summer *Anarchy* appears, though we'll be trying.

But don't forget that the C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions book publishing project did come out with the long-awaited second, expanded edition of John Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal* last year. *Anarchy* readers can still get copies by sending checks for \$14.95 + \$2.05 shipping & handling (for a total of \$17.00) to C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446.



## Openers

### Support C.A.L. Press!

OK. Here's the last reminder about the C.A.L. Press fund-raising drive! We're trying to recover from the bankruptcy of Fine Print Distributors (our largest distributor until a couple years ago), which lost us roughly \$13,000 total. With the last three issues of *Anarchy* we've managed to make a small amount of headway against this deficit, which now stands at less than \$10,000. But we continue this one last urgent appeal for extra support from anyone who believes that *Anarchy* magazine fulfills an important, unique role within the anarchist milieu. Our fund-raising goal is to completely make up our losses within the next 6 months (when this fund drive will end). And we do want to give donors something in return for their support.

- **\$20-\$49:** One copy of any C.A.L. Press book (see the books listed on page 7) or the *RIP WTO N30* video.
- **\$50-\$99:** Any two C.A.L. Press books on the list, plus a copy of our next book the minute it comes off the press.
- **\$100-\$199:** Any four C.A.L. Press books, plus the next two we publish.
- **\$200-\$299:** Any four C.A.L. Press books, plus the next two we publish, plus an entire set of 12 *Alternative Press Review* back issues.
- **\$300-\$499:** Any four C.A.L. Press books, plus the next two we publish, plus entire sets of *APR* (#1-#12) and available *Anarchy* back issues (#8-#49) to date.
- **\$500-999:** All the above, plus a 5-year sustaining subscription, which will give you copies of everything C.A.L. Press publishes during that time.
- **\$1,000 or more:** All the above, plus a 10-year Sustaining subscription, giving you copies of everything C.A.L. Press publishes for ten whole years.
- **\$10,000 or more:** All the above, plus the satisfaction of knowing that we won't have to bother readers by repeating this spiel ever again.

Or please consider any other extra support you can give. Order a copy of one of the new C.A.L. Press books, or the *RIP WTO N30* video. Check out the other important books or the *Anarchy* T-shirt available on the facing page. Subscribe to *Anarchy* and our sister magazine, *Alternative Press Review*. Consider giving gift subscriptions. Order back issues you've missed, or a complete set of *Anarchy* back issues still in print (#8 through #49 for our special price

of only \$60). Consider becoming a sustaining contributor by donating \$120/4 issues. Or just send us a small donation to help re-establish this project on a more solid basis. The success of this magazine always depends as much upon its readers as upon those who write, illustrate, edit and produce it.

Many, many thanks to everyone who has already contributed, and to everyone who helps us continue publishing into the future. We're proud to have published 50 issues of *Anarchy*, and we're looking forward to contributing to at least 50 more!

While we're at it, we don't want to forget to urge readers to contribute to other anarchist projects as well. Especially after the arrests in Seattle, Philadelphia, Eugene and Prague, there are many legal support funds that are looking for contributions. And don't forget other anarchist periodicals!

**-Jason McQuinn, Editor**

### Free Critter & Free!

On June 23rd Jeffrey "Free" Luers and Craig "Critter" Marshall were indicted on nine felony counts and one misdemeanor, by a Lane County, Oregon grand jury in Eugene. The charges were placed on the "defendants acting together with others as yet unnamed," ensuring a continuous "investigation" into the community they want to intimidate into hiding. The original charges were trumped up to 9 felonies and one misdemeanor. As far as we know they have no bail, and could face up to 86 years in prison.

For more information and to offer support call: 541-343-8548. To receive updates on their case, send email to: [eeae@efn.org](mailto:eeae@efn.org) or, write directly:

Jeffrey Luers (Free) #1306729  
101 W. 5th Street  
Eugene, Oregon 97401

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#### Anarchy after Leftism

Bob Black's most recent—and possibly most entertaining—book. An intelligent, witty & compelling demolition job on both Murray Bookchin's atrocious *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism* and his overall philosophical and radical pretensions. Highly recommended. (C.A.L. Press, 1997) 176pp. \$7.95 paper.

#### Future Primitive & Other Essays

John Zerzan's latest book, collecting critical essays from *Anarchy & Demolition Derby*, including "Future Primitive," "The Mass Psychology of Misery," "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism" and "Tonality and the Totality," along with his "Nihilist's Dictionary." (C.A.L. Press & Autonomedia, 1994) 185pp. \$6.95 paper.

#### Revolution of Everyday Life

Raoul Vaneigem's still-explosive masterpiece on radical subjectivity in a world of things and their prices. This book has been serialized in past issues of *Anarchy*, but it's well worth reading & re-reading. One of the two major works of the Situationist International, this text played a role in the gestation of the general strike of May, 1968 in France. (Left Bank & Rebel Press, 1967, 1994) 279pp. \$15.95 paper.

#### Against His-Story, Against Leviathan

Fredy Perlman's most important work presents his account of the world history of civilizations from their origins as they devoured primitive peoples and other civilizations on their way to the dead-end we know too well as the present day. A poetic and deeply subversive reversal of perspective on history. (Black & Red, 1983) 302pp. \$9.95 paper.

#### Letters of Insurgents

Fredy Perlman's fascinating & compelling novel of letters between continents revealing and concealing what is subversive and what is recuperated in the personal & public lives of two radicals—one American and one in Eastern Europe—from the upheavals of the '60s through the reaction which followed. (Black & Red, 1976) 831pp. \$12.95 paper.

#### The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism

Fredy Perlman's penetrating critique of nationalism left and right. This is an essential essay for understanding nationalism without illusions. (Black & Red, 1985) 58pp. \$2.95 paper.

#### History of the Makhnovist Movement

Peter Arshinov's inspiring firsthand account of the most important anarchist movement of the Russian Revolution, centered on the anarchist partisans organized by Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine, as they fought for their lives under attack from the Ukrainian nationalists, the Bolshevik counter-revolution and the Czarist White armies from 1918 until their defeat in 1921. This is an amazing and inspiring story. (Black & Red, 1987) 284pp. \$11.95 paper.

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#### Society of the Spectacle

Guy Debord's highly important masterpiece updating Marx's theory of commodity fetishism for an electronically-mediated world. "Everything which was once lived has moved into its representation." One of the two central works of the Situationist International. (Black & Red, 1967, 1983) unpaginated \$6.95 paper.

#### Situationist International Anthology

Ken Knabb's definitive translation and collection of the most important articles from the S.I.'s French journal, including those by Asger Jorn, Ivan Chitchevlov, Guy Debord, Raoul Vaneigem, Attila Kótányi, René Viénet & others. (Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981) 406pp. \$14.95 paper.

#### Journey through Utopia

Marie Louise Berneri's thorough and perceptive study of the most important utopian writings since Plato's *Republic*. (Freedom Press, 1950) 339pp. \$9.95 paper.

#### Against Civilization

A new anthology of "Readings and Reflections" put together by John Zerzan, including Hesiod on through to the "primitivists" of today, by way of Rousseau, William Morris, and Fourier, among others—51 selections in all. (Uncivilized Books, 1999) \$9.95 paper.

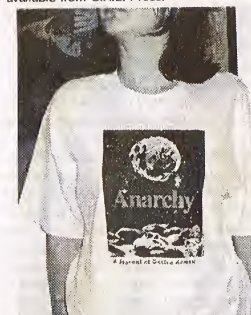
#### Begin at Start

Su Negrin's simple, straightforward & unpretentious primer for integrating the personal and the political, written from a 1960s-70s perspective. (Times Change Press, 1972) 173pp. \$5.95 paper.

#### Passionate and Dangerous: Conversations with Midwestern Anti-authoritarians & Anarchists

Well, maybe not all that "dangerous," but this new survey of the midwestern anarchist scene will give you a lot better idea of who is active and what's going on out there! (1999) 70pp. \$4.00 magazine format.

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# Revolution in Yugoslavia—who won?

Tom Wheeler

In late September, the Yugoslav opposition called for a country-wide general strike in a bid to force Slobodan Milosevic from power. "We will call citizens to a total protest and total resistance, a total boycott, a peaceful general strike," said Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) leader Zoran Djindjic. The call for a general strike came after the Federal Election Commission issued a ruling that Milosevic and opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica must face a run-off vote after neither candidate won an outright majority during the elections. The election commission showed Kostunica with nearly 49% of the vote compared to 38.6% for Milosevic. Opposition leaders disputed the results claiming Kostunica won well over 50% of the vote and no run-off was required.

Joining the DOS-led protests were a group of Belgrade anarchists who decided to join the opposition and support the general strike. They felt that taking Milosevic out of power was the top priority and that ordinary people would benefit from his removal. They also justified their involvement with the somewhat dubious assumption that a change in power would allow "more space" for radicals.

Within a matter of days the opposition was successful in ousting Milosevic. "We won!" rang a communique from the Belgrade anarchists. They claimed that "there is no doubt our society took a step toward freedom." While the Belgrade anarchists were savoring their apparent success, their victory cheers were drowned out by the monstrous roar of approval and unrestrained glee of many Western governments.

"A dark cloud has been lifted from the Balkans" said President Clinton. Clinton's enthusiasm matched that of the Belgrade anarchists as he lauded the events as a "people's uprising" and called it "an extraordinary victory." Secretary of State Madeleine Albright also praised the events as "great news."

Washington had a strong interest in backing the new leadership. After all, they financed it. For several months leading up to the September 24 election, US and NATO allies funneled millions of dollars to the opposition, bankrolled pre-election polls, and provided technical support. This was hardly a covert operation. In July 1999, the Clinton administration announced its not-so-secret plan to destabilize Yugoslavia. Several media accounts even furnished specific details such as providing financial aid for Serbian opposition groups, recruiting dissidents in the Serbian government and military, funding "independent" (i.e., NATO-approved) media and public relations firms.



An anarcho-syndicalist black-&-red flag flies over supporters of the Yugoslav "revolution."

Apparently the US effort to recruit military and government officials met with some success. Although there was plenty of genuine distaste for Milosevic and his regime, this "people's uprising" had some help from high places. DOS leaders reported that they received assurances from military commanders that they would not attack the demonstrators. Opposition leaders even coordinated several meetings with numerous police and state security officials in these matters.

Some events were not quite what they seemed. When a large crowd stormed the parliament building in the center of Belgrade, it was portrayed as a spontaneous act of self-liberation by the media. But according to a French wire report, the event was carefully planned. The mayor of Cacak, Velimir Ilic, told the French news agency AFP that his well-armed commando unit of 2,000 men had set out quite deliberately on October 5 to "take control of the key institutions of the regime, including the parliament and the television." Ilic is a member of the "Alliance for Change," one of the many opposition groups funded by Western interests. Ilic informed AFP that their actions "had been prepared in advance." His unit included parachute troops, former army and police officers as well as special forces. Some of these former commandos included veterans

of the civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia. In other words, the same paramilitaries primarily responsible for giving the Serbian people the reputation of "ethnic cleansers" and war criminals, were hailed by the Western media as heroes of a revolution.

What can we expect now that the NATO-financed opposition appears poised to take control? The chief economist for the DOS said: "We are thinking of adopting...a shock therapy in some areas, and mild and gradual reform in others." In fact the economic adjustments outlined in the DOS program are similar to US plans to break up Yugoslavia into a cluster of weakened free-market principalities.

The day after the elections, two prominent members of the opposition made a trip to Bulgaria where they met with representatives of the IMF, the World Bank and NATO governments at a "donor conference." Those members were Mladjan Dinkic, often named as a prospective Finance Minister in a DOS-led government, and Dr. Dragoslav Avramovic, an economist. A "Letter of Intent" was drafted which calls for rapid privatization under the control of Western donors and creditors. Some of the measures the NATO countries would like to impose include ending all price controls, introduction of "free

Continued on next page

# Amsterdam squatters evicted by riot cops

On Monday, June 26th 2000, the squatters of the Swammerdam neighborhood in East Amsterdam were finally evicted by a massive police operation costing 600,000 guilders (over \$250,000). We can only presume this was necessary because 50 people living together communally, running a non-profit bar and info-cafe, creating community garden space from derelict wasteland—in fact living together as a community—is nowadays considered just too dangerous and undesirable.

We were treated to a spectacular show of force:

- 150 riot police (with batons, shields and tear gas—thankfully they didn't use the gas)
- 50 plain clothes arresting police
- one bulldozer
- one water cannon
- one 40-meter tall crane
- and one helicopter

Quite an ensemble! But a fantastic struggle was put up full of creativity, action and not a little bit of daring. After a couple of weeks of trying legal means to save our homes (during which time we had to deal with increasing police intimidation), we were finally given one day's notice of the eviction.

A support action was hastily planned—an occupation of the offices of De Key housing corporation, which owns the houses. The occupation was really successful and peaceful, despite 40 riot police wanting to violently remove us. And even though we were just twenty people, half of whom were lying on mattresses in the street to show that we were now homeless. We demanded that De Key call off the eviction immediately and stop its



policy of selling-off social housing to be used as luxury apartments, but De Key seemed to be mysteriously deaf to these suggestions.

All the streets leading into our neighborhood were barricaded by 7am. The alarm call was sent out to all the squats in the city, and by 8 or 9am the streets were full of supporters. The forces of darkness seemed to have some difficulty getting out of bed however, and didn't show up until the afternoon. They arrived to find banners hanging from all the buildings saying "Why privatize when you can socialize?" "No pasaran," "Senseless," and "We will be back." Dozens and dozens of well-aimed paint bombs gave some bursts of color to the normally dull blue police vehicles! After

six hours of confrontation the homes were finally evicted—the police tactic was constantly blasting the houses with water cannon and finally using a sea-cargo container hanging from a 40-metre crane, filled with riot cops. When the cargo container landed on the rooftop police spilled out and then chainsawed their way into the house.

But the last laugh goes to us—the houses were strangely empty when the police finally got inside, not one squatter was to be found anywhere! Where could they have escaped to and how? Who knows?

The eviction and action got good coverage in all the national Dutch media, often very positive and sometimes even describing the issues behind the squatting.

So fifty people are now homeless on friends' floors, but this will only make us stronger—the CIA info-cafe re-opens in a new location this weekend, the tapas bar will soon follow, and more squats will be cracked!

Following this violent eviction, the nearby derelict land that was squatted and turned into a beautiful community garden over the past few months was also completely destroyed on the morning of Wednesday, June 28th, by construction workers. They simply bulldozed everything flat and chopped down all the trees and plants with chainsaws. Local residents who supported the squatters and people in other neighborhood squats have been on the receiving end of constant harassment by builders and security guards.

For squatting news see <http://squat.net> and for an archive on the Swammerdam squats see <http://squat.net/leeuwenhoek>

## Revolution in Yugoslavia

continued from previous page

markets," an end to all social protection, massive layoffs and drastic pay cuts. It also stipulates that future reconstruction contracts to repair damage caused by NATO's cowardly terrorist war against the civilian population be entrusted to companies from those very same NATO countries.

If one examines the free-market medicine administered to countries like Bulgaria, the Ukraine and Russia, one can get a sense of what to expect in Yugoslavia. In the Ukraine, a \$360 million dollar loan was provided for accepting the IMF's shock treatment. The result? The price of bread increased 300%. The price of electricity increased 600%,

public transport 900%. The grain market was deregulated and Ukraine went from being a grain exporter to begging for food. In Bulgaria, the stripping of social defenses led to mass poverty and suffering. The World Bank now admits that nearly 90% of Bulgarians live below the poverty line. In Russia, free market policies led to massive wage decreases. Social indicators such as average lifespan and overall health have declined dramatically.

The same week the West was engaged in ecstatic euphoria over the events in Yugoslavia, the European Children's Trust, a group active in nearly a dozen Eastern European countries, released a report which found that poverty in Eastern Europe had increased more than tenfold over the decade since the

introduction of market reforms. The report found that "for all its many faults, the old system provided most people with a reasonable standard of living and a certain security." There has been a near total collapse of social structures in many parts of these countries.

Who won? Some anarchists may indeed feel that Yugoslavia has "taken a step toward freedom" and created "more space" for radicals. However, the more likely scenario is the US and NATO will gain additional influence and power in Serbia. Their fingerprints are all over this "revolution." The real space opening up is not for radicals and anarchists but for the IMF, World Bank and multinational corporations to move in and exploit the Balkan resources.



# A Cavalier History of Surrealism

Review by Alex O. Trotter

A *Cavalier History of Surrealism* by Raoul Vaneigem ("Jules-François Dupuis") & translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (AK Press, Edinburgh & San Francisco, 1999 [1977]) 132pp., \$9.95 paper.

Those familiar with Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* will recall the thesis on Dada and Surrealism in the chapter on culture and consumption. Modern art concluded with these two movements, each of them committed to revolution but each suffering from a one-sided flaw; Dada attempted to abolish art with realizing it, and Surrealism attempted to realize art without abolishing, or suppressing, it. The Situationists called for the reuniting of the two halves of this unhappy dialectic through the simultaneous realization and suppression of art in the course of a general proletarian revolution that transforms life. A *Cavalier History of Surrealism* expands on this thesis which was presented by Debord in a nutshell, although, of course, it is much more about Surrealism than Dada. In a prefatory Author's Note, Vaneigem explains his choice of a pseudonym (the name of the janitor who worked in the building where Lautréamont died) and describes his own book dismissively as "merely a diversion."

This attitude suggests either that Vaneigem thought a critique of Surrealism was not actually worth his time, or that this book is somehow not worthy of his best efforts. A *Cavalier History* was written in haste under contractual deadline for a French publisher who intended it for high school students, but it is a rewarding read (more so than Maurice Nadeau's not-so-cavalier *The History of Surrealism*) and anything but a dumbed-down or lackadaisical text. Many of its themes are carried over from *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, also written for "the young generations." In fact, it is well over the heads of most American high school students, and probably of French ones, as well. Vaneigem says much in his brief work, and you get the feeling he could have said much more. Still, it's the most interesting thing I've read concerning Surrealism since André Thirion's *Revolutionaries without Revolution*.

The History, in terms of events, can be summarized very selectively as follows: Early period, break with Dada (1923). 1924-25: "pivotal years" when the movement crystallized around André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Philippe Soupault, and when the first

manifesto was written. There followed a growing involvement with the communist movement, beginning with contacts with intellectuals on the left wing of the French Communist Party who published a journal called *Clarté*. Breton joined the C.P. briefly in 1927. The Second Manifesto of Surrealism appeared in 1930, also the year Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí joined the movement. Surrealism started to spread to other coun-

**In Vaneigem's view, Dada's principal failure ("negativity without transcendence") was more excusable than Surrealism's ("transcendence without negativity"), because the Dadas were for the liquidation of culture, whereas the Surrealists tried to restore to art a life it no longer had or deserved. The Surrealists succumbed to two principal errors: they accepted the Bolshevik leadership of the revolutionary movement, and they attempted an overthrow of culture that was bound to fail given that Surrealism itself was a cultural phenomenon, and so they succeeded only in renewing culture's lease on, and domination over, life.**

tries, at first, notably, Czechoslovakia, later all over the world. In 1932, Aragon and Georges Sadoul traveled to the USSR, returning as starry-eyed soldiers of Stalinism. They were later joined by Paul Éluard. Breton broke with all of them. Breton and Benjamin Péret rallied to the cause of Trotsky and the Fourth International (what Vaneigem calls their "lesser evil reformism"). But Péret's Trotskyism, always very unorthodox, leaned toward anarchism, as he demonstrated in his commitment to fight for the revolution in Spain, first for the Marxist P.O.U.M., then for the anarchist Friends of Durruti. He was the only member of the Surrealist group to risk his life in such a direct way. Meanwhile, Antonin Artaud, who instinctively distrusted politics, explored extreme psychological states in existential response to the alienation of everyday life. The Second World War exiled the Surrealists from Europe. The main contingent followed Breton to New York, while Péret and a few others opted for Mexico. After 1945 Surrealism broke no new ground; the politics became confused, and there was an increasing trend toward mysticism. The Surrealists were overshadowed by

existentialism in France and Abstract Expressionism in the United States. They opposed the French colonial wars in Algeria and Indochina, and worked briefly with anarchists. By the late 1960s, however, the residues of Surrealism came out in support of the Stalinoid state-capitalism of revolutionary Cuba, which Vaneigem presents as evidence of the movement's moribundity. He makes no mention of its continued presence in the

United States, in the form of the Chicago group led by the Rosemonts.

Surrealism is today usually remembered for its expressions in visual art (e.g., the paintings of Max Ernst and Salvador Dalí, or the films of Luis Buñuel), and it is seldom thought of in its historical and political dimensions. Surrealism made its appearance at the moment in history that the Situationists identified with the birth of the "society of the spectacle," and Victor Serge's "midnight in the [twentieth] century": the darkness presided over by National Socialism and National Bolshevism. It was a point at which it was becoming painfully obvious that art was inadequate to comfort or decorate a world in which the conditions of life itself were becoming degraded to such an extreme degree. This point had already been reached with the slaughter of the First World War, and

now, in the same moment that the Nazis unleashed their mystique of death, the Surrealists stepped forward as revolutionary defenders of life, love, and the pursuit of happiness (or an ideologized mystique thereof, as Vaneigem says).

In the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* Breton had made the statement that the simplest surrealist act would be to fire a pistol into a crowd at random. Vaneigem comments: "Once we have arrived at the sort of despair that impels us, following the logic of death that power imposes, to open fire into the crowd, there is only one way beyond this predicament, and that is the liquidation of power in the name of a dialectic of life and of all the hope life embodies." In a time when high school students all over the U.S.A. have been blowing away their teachers and classmates with abandon, a more on-point analysis would be difficult to make. The official response to the school shootings by media pundits suggested expanding the power of the death culture, not liquidating it. Come to think of it, this book ought indeed to find an audience among high schoolers.

The death culture took its toll on the mem-

bers of the Surrealist group, among whom there were numerous suicides: René Crevel, Arshile Gorky, Oscar Domínguez, Jean-Pierre Duprey, Wolfgang Paalen, and Karel Teige.

In Vaneigem's view, Dada's principal failure ("negativity without transcendence") was more excusable than Surrealism's ("transcendence without negativity"), because the Dadas were for the liquidation of culture, whereas the Surrealists tried to restore to art a life it no longer had or deserved. The Surrealists succumbed to two principal errors: they accepted the Bolshevik leadership of the revolutionary movement, and they attempted an overthrow of culture that was bound to fail given that Surrealism itself was a cultural phenomenon, and so they succeeded only in renewing culture's lease on, and domination over, life. In other words, Surrealism did not go far enough in challenging the power of representation, both political and cultural, over directly lived experience. Nevertheless, Vaneigem is willing to dispense praise where it is due, and decides that Surrealism's failure was "honorable," perhaps because the failure of the Dadaists' and Surrealists' assault on the culture of modern capitalism ultimately hinged on a larger failure that was beyond their control—that of the classical workers' movement to effect the social revolution.

Among the prominent figures and animators of the movement, Vaneigem expresses his highest regard for André Breton, Benjamin Péret, and Antonin Artaud. Breton is usually thought of as the undisputed kingpin of Surrealism, but Vaneigem makes the case for Péret as a figure of equal if not greater importance who was actually more radical than Breton. Breton's breaks with and expulsions of a host of one-time associates, notably Aragon (for his Stalinism) and Dalí (for his clerical fascist sympathies and crass commercialism), are mostly commended and defended. Vaneigem's attitude toward Breton is one of great ambivalence. He credits Breton as a brilliant thinker—indeed, lets him have the last word in this book—but takes numerous critical digs at Surrealism's chief theorist.

Vaneigem's critique of Surrealism as ideology is twofold—covering both culture and politics. As for culture, Surrealism is criticized for clinging to art. Vaneigem demonstrates, on the whole, a disdain for the painters, most particularly the superstars Dalí and Picasso. Other artists such as Max Ernst, Joan Miró, and René Magritte are criticized for being, well, artists, but are granted some grudging admiration as well, along with such non-Surrealist kindred spirits as Paul Klee and Giorgio de Chirico. Women were promi-

nent in (and around) Surrealism as artists, if not as writers and intellectuals, but only one, the Czech artist Toyen, is mentioned in *A Cavalier History*. The most well known Surrealist films are the two Buñuel/Dalí collaborations, *Un Chien andalou* and *L'Âge d'or*, which Vaneigem justifiably hails as masterpieces. Buñuel's subsequent films are, however, derided as the work of a cinéaste, a breed the Situationists poured their scorn upon. *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, by Man Ray, Hans Richter, and Max Ernst, is described as "a film that deserves to be better known in France." Well, I've seen this film, and didn't think it was anything to write

**Vaneigem identifies three stages of culture in decline. First there is self-liquidation. Examples cited are James Joyce for the novel, Duchamp for sculpture, Malevich for painting, and Satie for music. Then comes self-parody, the stage in which postmodernism seems to be stuck. Finally there is self-transcendence, meaning the "directly lived poetry" of insurrectionary moments, in which creativity takes the form of remaking the world itself. Vaneigem likens all artistic and intellectual movements after Surrealism's half-revolution to "cultural cattle trough[s]."**

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Coming out of the lineage of Romanticism's protest against the outrages of commercial and industrial civilization, the Surrealists valued childhood, dreams, primitive mythology, black humor, eroticism, and

madness for their pristine subjectivity and nearness to authentic experience. But this noble quest entailed several shortcomings. There were inconsistencies in the Surrealist views regarding love and passion. The early championship of "mad love" eventually yielded to what Vaneigem calls a "cult of Woman," an absolute of elective and exclusive love that reinvented the Christian distinction between the carnal and the spiritual and stood isolated from the totality of revolutionary transformation. Breton took offense at such things as homosexuality and the idea that a man or a woman could have two lovers at once. This kind of attitude was at

odds with Surrealism's professed aim of the liberation of desire. Automatic writing, one of the principal Surrealist experiments, never realized its full potential, for example, in exploring a critique of language itself as a form of alienation (another front on which Dada had been more advanced). Dreams were mined mostly for poetic-artistic inspiration without a sufficient awareness of the extent to which the engines of domination had become dream factories. Vaneigem wants the Surrealists to have agitated for putting the entire technological apparatus of modern society in the service of the realization of dreams, a puzzling stance that seems to place more faith in technology than is warranted. He compares the post-World War II Surrealists to Don Quixote in their defense of myth against the society of the spectacle, a product of their despairing view of history's disappointments and atrocities. But did not the Situationists inherit some of the Surrealists' "nostalgia for château life"? And was their cause not just as quixotic? Perhaps what we have here is a Cavalier as well as a cavalier history!

The Surrealists could never quite break with the ambition to be artists and men of letters, and they took Freud too much on his own terms, but it was in their involvement with Communist Party politics that they went most seriously astray. At first Breton *et al.* called for a "Surrealist revolution," then scaled this ambition down to "Surrealism in the service of the revolution." The Communists were initially bemused by Surrealism, then outright hostile toward it, regarding it as an exercise in bourgeois solipsism. Vaneigem even compares some of Breton's statements concerning the role of intellectuals in the revolutionary process to Maoist pabulum about "serving the people." Even at their best the Surrealists were largely oblivious of the extent to which their project was incompatible with Marxism and Leninism. Vaneigem taxes the Surrealists with a late discovery of Hegel and an inadequate under-

Continued on page 13



# The Anarchist Tension

Review by Jeff Shantz

*The Anarchist Tension* by Alfredo M. Bonanno (Elephant Editions, BM Elephant, London, WC1N 3XX, England, 1998) 31pp., \$2.50 pamphlet.

"Anarchists inhabit an uncomfortable planet in any case because when the struggle is going well they are forgotten about and when the struggle goes badly they are accused of being responsible, of having approached it the wrong way, of having taken it to the wrong conclusions." (p.30)

*The Anarchist Tension* is yet another attractive pamphlet from Elephant Editions. The text consists of a talk given by Bonanno at some or other unnamed conference and begins with the author-lecturer asking the question, "What is anarchism?" Bonanno suggests that this is a question which always bids asking, first because anarchists are often unable to give much of an answer ourselves, and, more importantly, because "anarchism" is an evolving notion.

"Because it is not a definition that can be made once and for all, put in a safe and considered a patrimony to be tapped little by little. Being an anarchist does not mean one has reached a certainty, or said once and for all, 'There, from now on I hold the truth and as such, at least from the point of view of the idea, I am a privileged person.' Anyone who thinks like this is an anarchist in word alone." (pp.3-4)

Much of the pamphlet is devoted to Bonanno's argument for the importance of living anarchy—of making ideas, feelings, aesthetics, desires and actions one in life.

"When we wake up in the morning and put our feet on the ground we must have a good reason for getting up, if we don't it makes no difference whether we are anarchists or not. We might as well stay in bed and sleep." (p.4)

Life, for anarchists, holds a qualitatively different character than for democrats. In response to democratic criticisms of anarchism, Bonanno responds that anarchism is not a quantification, a success or failure, but an ongoing tension.

"This is the critique we need to throw back at the supporters of democracy. If we anarchists are utopians, we are so as a tension towards quality; if democrats are utopians, they are so as a reduction towards quantity. And against reduction, against the atrophy lived in a dimension of the minimum possible damage for them, and the maximum damage

for the great number of people who are exploited, to this miserable reality we oppose our utopia which is at least a utopia of quality, a tension towards another future, one that will be radically different to what we are living now." (p.8)

What is needed is action to break the lies of the democratic dystopians.

"Because any one of us can realise we have been swindled, because we have finally

**Now freedom is an idea we must hold in our hearts, but at the same time we need to understand that if we desire it we must be ready to face all the risks that destruction involves, all the risks of destroying the constituted order we are living under. Freedom is not a concept to cradle ourselves in, in the hope that improvements will develop independently of our real capacity to intervene.**

realised what is being done to our detriment. And in rising up against it all we can change not only the reality of things within the limits that it is possible to know them, but also one's life, make it worthy of being lived." (p.9)

Anarchism is always more than the sum of events and actions, of theories, people and movements. It's this precisely this "something other" which, according to Bonanno, ensures that anarchy lives on.

"So we continually need to maintain a relationship between this tension towards something absolutely other, the unthinkable, the unsayable, a dimension we must realise without very well knowing how to, and the daily experience of the things we can and do, do. A precise relationship of change, of transformation." (p.10)

Bonanno cautions that anarchists not make any idea into a religious concept, something which comforts us in our present misery with promises of delivery and salvation in some indeterminate future. Nice ideas, uncritically held, do not solve problems but mystify and cloud them over.

"Now freedom is an idea we must hold in our hearts, but at the same time we need to understand that if we desire it we must be ready to face all the risks that destruction involves, all the risks of destroying the constituted order we are living under. Freedom is not a concept to cradle ourselves in, in the hope that improvements will develop independently of our real capacity to intervene."

(p.14).

Anarchists, thus need to break through "massified ideas" (p.15), the reduction of thought to "flattened," "uniform" and "acceptable" opinions. "We are not for more freedom. More freedom is given to the slave when his chains are lengthened. We are for the abolition of the chain, so we are for freedom, not more freedom." (p.13)

In one of the more insightful passages, Bonanno relates transformations within the workplace, i.e. flexible production, to the socialization of a "new human," the "flexible person with modest ideas, rather opaque in their desires, with considerably reduced cultural levels, impoverished language, standardised reading, a limited capacity to think and a great capacity to make yes or no decisions." (p.20) Lean production becomes the model for human expectation and experience. This "lean identity" extends the workplace throughout society rendering capital fully social.

"What will they do with such a person? They will use them to bring about all the modifications that are necessary to restructuring capital. They will be useful for a better management of the conditions and relations of the capitalism of tomorrow.... This new person is quite the opposite of what we are capable of imagining or desire; the opposite of quality, creativity, the opposite of real desire, the Joy of life, the opposite of all this." (p.20)

Despite this concern, Bonanno does not view the working class as the center of social structure or social analysis. He urges anarchists to think beyond both Marx and anarcho-syndicalists since, in his view, "the working class has practically disintegrated" (p.23)—a claim that does not appear valid in the face of more people doing more lousy work for more time. A better analysis might be found in George Caffentzis' writings on the return of slavery.

Unfortunately, Bonanno offers only a limited caricature of anarcho-syndicalism. Syndicalists, contrary to Bonanno's depiction, have not argued for the simple control by workers of existing productive structures. Syndicalists have argued for a new world, but recognize that it is unlikely to occur unless workers break the chains of capitalist social relations (including work relations).

For all this Bonanno is no anti-organizationalist. He argues that anarchists need agile organizations, since "power realises itself in time and space" (p.29), and sees the

Continued on next page

# Anarchism & American Traditions

Review by Jeff Shantz

*Anarchism & American Traditions* by Voltairine de Cleyre (See Sharp Press, POB 6118, San Francisco, CA 94101, 1989) 16pp., \$1.00 pamphlet.

The American anarchist Benjamin Tucker declared famously that anarchists were simply "unfrightened Jeffersonians" (a dubious proposition to be sure). In her essay *Anarchism & American Traditions*, Voltairine de Cleyre contrasts Jefferson's heady words with the sorry reality of the US republic of the 19th Century.

De Cleyre sees in American intellectual history a tradition of hostility to central government, grown from religious rebellion, small self-reliant communities, isolated conditions and hard life. Sadly, this tradition has not amounted to much in the face of expanding and strengthening government authority. If the Revolution was a blow against tyranny, then those aspects of it which promised a defense of liberty have been contorted into the mechanisms of governmental power.

Of course the punchline is that Jefferson gave the game away right from the first play by supporting a constitutional "compromise between liberty and government." Jefferson was not primarily concerned with abolishing political authority, but simply wished some increase in popular involvement. Likewise, he had no interest in any reforms which might threaten private property. In accepting government as a "necessary evil" the future of tyranny was assured.

The great fear expressed in this pamphlet concerns the carelessness and lack of vigilance of a public grown complacent and confident regarding the institutions which govern them (a worry she also sees in Jefferson's early writings). Her pamphlet is a cry for recognition of the theft of people's liberties by "governmental force, fraud, and privilege." (p.8) Where the public sleeps the State marauds. As she so aptly puts it: "The right of assemblage is an American tradition which has gone out of fashion; the police club is now the mode. And it is so in virtue of peoples' indifference to liberty...." (13) In place of complacency and acquiescence, de Cleyre urges watchfulness and determination.

Not surprisingly, de Cleyre is most enraged by the falsification of acts of rebellion (both historic and contemporary) which serve only to slander the rebels while legitimizing each act of the government. Without a sense of the meaning behind such acts, the "American Revolution" becomes nothing more than an exceptional case, the one acceptable instance of something to be detested in all

other cases—with the Boston Tea Party rebels as "the one sacrosanct mob in all history." (p.8) De Cleyre seeks to rescue other instances of rebellion and dissent from the dustbin of history and provides examples from early US history to show manifestations of the instinct against centralization and governmentalization.

A particular impediment to be overcome is the servile character of public education which serves not to nourish yearnings for liberty, but instead to foster obedience to government. Instead of emphasizing the libertarian themes of the revolution, public educators stress the necessity for government involvement in greater realms of private activity. For de Cleyre, governmental management of education (along with developments of industry) is one of the main forces distorting traditions of freedom and equality.

**...De Cleyre is most enraged by the falsification of acts of rebellion (both historic and contemporary) which serve only to slander the rebels while legitimizing each act of the government. Without a sense of the meaning behind such acts, the "American Revolution" becomes nothing more than an exceptional case, the one acceptable instance of something to be detested in all other cases—with the Boston Tea Party rebels as "the one sacrosanct mob in all history."**

As a corrective to the dull propaganda suffered by victims of public school de Cleyre offers her assessment in this short piece.

So, what is the likelihood that people will break out of their indifference and subversive. Given her sense that most Americans of her day greatly prefer material possessions to liberty, de Cleyre's prognosis is bleak: "I have no hope that they will ever, by means of intellectual or moral stirrings merely, throw off the yoke of oppression fastened on them by the present economic system, to institute free societies." (p.15) Her vision becomes one of despair in which she can only imagine change resulting from the blind development of the economy and related political oppression: only when people are faced with the prospect of "sitting down and dying in the midst of it, or confiscating the goods." (p.15) Anarchism or barbarism.

This remains, however, a worthwhile read.

While there is not much in it that will be new for anyone familiar with anarchist political theory it does offer a nice introduction to an anarchist critique of republicanism. I recommend it especially for all recent victims of public education.

## A Cavalier History of Surrealism

continued from page 11

standing of dialectics that left them susceptible to the influence of the hack dialecticians of the Third and Fourth Internationals. Breton had once called for "a thoroughgoing critique of certain aspects of the thought of Lenin and even of Marx," a task he never followed up on. Vaneigem and his Situationist comrades took this kind of critique quite a bit further than the Surrealists had done, but still not far enough. Theirs too we could call an honorable failure.

The Situationists owed much to Surrealism, for good and ill. In the Surrealists' embrace of fortuitous encounters lie the origins of the *dérive*; the wordplay and photomontages of the Dadas are the forerunners of Situationist *détournement*. The Surrealist practice of exclusions and expulsions, even to the point of excess, for the sake of preserving the group's purity of purpose was replicated faithfully by the Situationists, with Debord filling Breton's shoes. No one today should be content with merely imitating Surrealism. But for all their shortcomings, Dada, Surrealism, and their Lettrist/Situationist heirs remain important points of departure for the radical movements of today and tomorrow.

## The Anarchist Tension

continued from previous page

small affinity group as the most effective form. Not just a group of folks getting together for a party or chat, as in Bey's autonomous zones, the affinity group is a place of conscious preparation for action. Different affinity groups will bring their ideas to other groups through an informal federation. Curiously, much of Bonanno's discussion on this matter does not sound overly dissimilar to some notions of anarcho-syndicalism.

This is a work that raises as many questions as it answers, which is its strength. While some of Bonanno's suggestions are insufficiently addressed here, leaving many of his arguments unconvincing, it remains a compelling piece animated by an overarching commitment to action.



# Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left

Review by Lawrence Jarach

*Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* by Murray Bookchin (AK Press, POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682; and POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland, 1999) 352pp., \$19.95 paper.

I really resent the fact that, in order to be as careful as possible with my critique of this hefty tome, I have had to read it cover to cover three times. That's at least two times too many for what I knew was going to be a bitterly ire-provoking experience. My suspicions were not unfounded; alas, I would prefer my intuitive capabilities (such as they are) to be used in the pursuit of more pleasurable endeavors. There is something on almost every page of this compendium that is either objectionable or provocative; however, because I merely wanted to write a review rather than a detailed refutation of Murray's authoritarian opinions, I have picked several examples of his nonsense and arranged them thematically for easy reading in the sections that follow.

## Murray the SHOUTER or LOUDER isn't truer

In the preface, Murray alerts his readers that his political project is an attempt "to create a left-libertarian synthesis" (p.10) of what he sees as the best parts of the leftist and anarchist traditions. Unfortunately, by preserving the old he cannot break with the old; his nostalgia is a straitjacket. Because his project rests on his sentimental reminiscences and yearnings for "The Left That Was," he can't move beyond certain authoritarian patterns that were established in his early career as a Stalinist, then as a Trotskyist. Fortunately for the reader, he is delightfully candid about them, so anyone can see exactly where he first developed that crankiness that's become more vociferous and increasingly authoritarian in the last decade or so.

If Bookchin is merely a contemptible loud mouth whose writings have little relevance to contemporary anarchic theory and practice, then why not just ignore his rambling rants and irritable musings? Partly it's due to the fact that at least some people in the anarchist scene, anticipating Murray's every

utterance with breathless excitement, still consider him to be a leading thinker and writer, and anarcho-leaders have been (and indeed should be) challenged throughout anarchist history. This is my contribution to that fine tradition. Besides, he continues to

In the preface, Murray alerts his readers that his political project is an attempt "to create a left-libertarian synthesis" of what he sees as the best parts of the leftist and anarchist traditions. Unfortunately, by preserving the old he cannot break with the old; his nostalgia is a straitjacket. Because his project rests on his sentimental reminiscences and yearnings for "The Left That Was," he can't move beyond certain authoritarian patterns that were established in his early career as a Stalinist....

wail, to blame, to excommunicate, to denounce, to whine...In short, to revert to the Marxist-Leninist tradition of his early youth: "I would face my expectant, sometimes hostile audience sternly and begin talking at the top of my lungs so that I could be heard over the voices of the other speakers across the street...Our voices had to be loud and forceful, and our gestures—generally raising our arms and clenching our fists—had to be very dramatic" (p.34). In other words, he just won't shut up. Each new attempt by Bookchin and other authoritarian anarchists to confine anarchism within narrow (often self-referential) boundaries demands a new response; the dangers of such ideological limitations to a wider antiauthoritarian project need to be continually exposed.

## Murray the interviewee or Bookchin's just-so stories

Oral history, the interviewing of participants and eyewitnesses, has become an increasingly validated method of enhancing historical narratives. The format of conscious subjectivity helps to balance, if not undermine altogether, the idea of the Great Man of History. Oral history is part of a larger antiauthoritarian project; it brings the concept of the personal-as-political into a more analytical context, thereby acknowledging the

power and influence of individuals who are not involved in political policy decisions.

With that said, it is also clear that there are numerous problems with oral history if it is used independently of investigative (or more objective and scholarly) history. Selective memory, self-censorship, skewed chronologies, and any number of more cynical ways to make the interviewee look better and/or more important are all part of the hazards of relying solely on autobiographical accounts for historical analysis. Personal experiences and first-hand knowledge (creatively reworked or not) can easily get mixed up with second- and third-hand gossip, rumor, and speculation, further eroding the person's reliability. It is therefore important for an interviewer and/or editor to have some serious background in the topics/years being covered in the interview(s); speculations can be challenged or discarded, assertions and opinions can be checked and separated from facts, chronologies can be corrected. Oral history can flesh out otherwise remote and dry analysis with exciting and engaging personal stories. Without a balance of less subjective inquiry, however, oral history can be a cranky collection of self-serving rants, a string of axe-grinding anecdotes. Bookchin's oral history is riddled with this lack of balance.

In *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left*, Murray's reminiscences and subjective analyses replace the Great Man of History thesis with the I Am The Great Man of History thesis. He gives himself credit for all sorts of innovations; but if someone else became famous for something he supposedly thought of first, well, that was just because they had more access to better publicity.

## Murray the innovator or if he does say so himself

"I wrote a fiery leaflet called 'Stop the Bomb'...my leaflet really produced a profound effect on many of the peace activists that I knew" (p.51). What was the effect and how do we know about it? Unfortunately for the interested reader, the oral history format allows Murray to make any outrageous claim he wants without citing independent sources to corroborate his assertions.

In 1962, Bookchin wrote *Our Synthetic Environment*. "I surveyed agriculture and

demanding that we turn toward organic forms of agriculture...I was advancing fairly innovative ideas, although they were not exclusively my own...I argued for an alternative technology, or what I called an 'eco-technology.'" But then "[s]ix months later, Rachel Carson came out with *Silent Spring* and swamped whatever readership I might have gained. My book sold reasonably well, mainly within the scientific community I may say...But she didn't make, by any means, the wide-ranging critique that I did...I tried to raise broader issues...I was calling for the abolition of *hierarchies...of states*" (pp.53-4). Further, he insists, "I pioneered criticism, from a left perspective, precisely of fertilizers and petrochemical pesticides" (p.249). In a rare moment of candor, he admits that his "innovative" ideas are "not exclusively [his] own," but then complains when someone else advances similar (but better written?) ideas that are more popular. How does he (or we) know that his book sold "reasonably well"? By what criteria can he (or we) judge such a statement? And how the hell does he know that it sold at all "within the scientific community"? Did he track each sale of the book, giving each purchaser a questionnaire concerning their professions?

"There is a long history of an ever-expanding horizon of freedom, and I tried to contribute to it in the 1960s by advancing the notion of a nonhierarchical society. This notion has now been accepted as conventional wisdom, even on the part of my critics" (pp.273-4). Incredibly, Murray credits himself with "advancing" an idea that every anarchist in the previous 100 years or so has been busily and tirelessly promoting.

"I developed a form of ecological anarchism...the name I gave it...was *social ecology*. I started writing about it earnestly in the 1960s...I wrote 'Towards a Liberatory Technology,' in which I called for the use of...all the different renewable forms of energy...it was E. F. Schumacher who made them very popular in *Small Is Beautiful*, but as his references show, he was familiar with my work when he did so. The ecology movement now takes alternative, renewable energy for granted, as though the idea came from the heavens" (pp.56-7). Once again, someone else supposedly took Murray's innovations and popularized them. Schumacher's book, like Carson's—and unlike Bookchin's—is still in print, so I looked up the citations. It turns out that they concern the widespread dissatisfaction of city people with the alienation of modern urban existence. In fact, there's nothing at all concerning renewable "eco-technology" in that section of *Small Is Beautiful*. Bookchin is being blatantly dishonest.

"In 1967 I was working with a collective

called the *Anarchos* Group...[which] turned out a magazine that tried to spread its ideas—with remarkable influence, in some respects." (p.85) (How did he track this "influence"? Then, sometime in 1968, "my *Anarchos* group...asked ourselves what was needed. What was needed, I thought, was a coherent movement" (p.97). (In 1967, the *Anarchos* Group is a collective; one year later, it's his *Anarchos* group. Is that just a slip of the tongue?) Anarchists had been trying to build such an influential movement since the days of the First International (1864-76). Murray's call for "a coherent movement" was already a hundred years old.

If Bookchin is merely a contemptible loud mouth whose writings have little relevance to contemporary anarchic theory and practice, then why not just ignore his rambling rants and irritable musings? Partly it's due to the fact that at least some people in the anarchist scene, anticipating Murray's every utterance with breathless excitement, still consider him to be a leading thinker and writer, and anarcho-leaders have been (and indeed should be) challenged throughout anarchist history.

## Murray the wordsmith or Grammar is a stupid thing

An area where Bookchin is indisputably innovative is in the construction of what I like to call Murraywords and Murraygrammar. Murraywords are bad enough, but when used with Murraygrammar (as in the next section), the situation becomes even worse. Here are some examples:

• **Equatable** (p.118); here he means equivalent, *equal in value*, rather than what he tried to say (badly): *able to be equated*.

• **Invertebracy** (p.150); he means *lacking in strength*, but the real word is *invertebrate*, which is both a noun and an adjective. There is no corresponding abstract noun describing *a condition of having no spine*.

• **Processual** (p.155); he must mean something like *advancing* or *evolutionary* but the Murraygrammar where this Murrayword occurs is too confusing to come to a definitive conclusion.

• **Fundament** (p.265); this one is more tricky, since *fundament* is a real word. My dictionary defines *fundament* as "an underlying ground, theory, or principle," making Bookchin's use problematic. My guess is that he really means *foundation*, but wanted to sound more intellectual than he really is.

• **Equivocally** (p.268); again, he's using a real word, but incorrectly—I think. According to my dictionary, the word means *undecided* or *obscure*. I'm certain he meant to say *especially* or perhaps even *unequivocally*.

Communication is dependent upon clear language; clear language is dependent upon adhering to grammatical standards. From an antiauthoritarian perspective, grammar is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can be used as a means of repression, by controlling how we are able (or not) to articulate our critiques and analyses; on the other hand, by knowing how to use grammar as a tool, we can open up new possibilities in language, and hopefully, thought and action. Imagination and poetry in language, thought, and action is impossible without a certain amount of grammar. It is with this in mind that I object to arbitrary neologisms and sloppy language. Besides, on a more mundane level, confusing and/or poor language impedes authentic (and most definitely egalitarian) communication.

## Murray the art critic or A tale of two covers

"To ordinary people...no protest is more frivolous than the sight of a spindly kid throwing a stone at a cop (as in the cover art on Black's

*Anarchy after Leftism*)—the image, par excellence, of irresponsible, juvenile bravado" (p.244). This awkward sentence is a paradigmatic example of Murraygrammar; it's difficult to figure out exactly what he's trying to say, except that he disapproves of the cover art of *Anarchy after Leftism*. But is he saying that it's the "spindly kid throwing a stone" or the "sight of a spindly kid throwing a stone" that's the most frivolous protest to "ordinary people"? I'm willing to go out on a limb and assume that he meant the former, but unfortunately, his syntax points to the latter. This means that he thinks that "ordinary people" who look at the cover of Bob's book will see the most frivolous protest. Aside from his patronizing attitude toward non-radicals (he magically knows exactly how they will respond to this photo), by pontificating in this confused manner, Bookchin ignores the fact that a great deal of social protest is fueled by bravado (juvenile or not). Manifest outrage (from silent civil disobedience all the way through open insurrection) in the face of overwhelming odds is often seen as the height of dangerous irresponsibility—and our sage elders have no compunction about informing us of it every time we try to break out of their control. The anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle have further polarized the ones with the bravado and the ones who urge caution



## Alternative Media Review

and restraint. By saying that it's an "image" problem instead of a content problem, he's just judging the book by its cover.

Well, if he wants to play that game, I can too. The cover of *Anarchism, Marxism and the Future of the Left* shows "Carlo Tresca speaking in New York City at the Sacco-Vanzetti Rally." *The Sacco-Vanzetti Rally?* There were many rallies in support of Sacco and Vanzetti in New York, not just the one in the photo, and Tresca spoke at several of them. The choice of Tresca and the support of Sacco and Vanzetti is odd; it goes counter to the flow of Bookchin's autobiographical anecdotes. Murray was just six years old when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts executed those two anarchists, and he never once mentions Tresca. The judicial murder of Sacco and Vanzetti made an impression on him, but it was limited to watching his parents and neighbors buy newspapers on the night of their execution: "All the lights in my neighborhood came on, and everyone came out, some in their nightclothes, to get a paper. The sense of solidarity was intense!" (p.21).

After seven years of legal wrangling, widespread and very large protests by people espousing a broad spectrum of political opinions from the liberal to the revolutionary, the state still tried them. The solidarity with Sacco and Vanzetti surely had taken place during those seven years of actions from the time of their arrests. Upon receiving the news of their murders, the sense of defeat must have been more intense. This unfortunate episode looks more like the solidarity of impotent outrage.

Carlo Tresca is a strange choice for a cover hero. He was the most flamboyantly bourgeois of any famous anarchist in the US in the first half of the 20th century. He approved of the electoral victory of the Italian Socialist Party in 1919 in keeping with his dedication to revolutionary syndicalism—this after his break with the IWW over the issue of his conspicuous friendships with rich lawyers and lawmen. His continued intimate relationship with authoritarian leftists like Elizabeth Gurley Flynn—even after she helped found the Communist Party—didn't make him a favorite of anarchists either.

Murray could have had Alexander Berkman (who also spoke at several Sacco and Vanzetti rallies) on the cover, or Kropotkin, or Bakunin, or some other 19th century figure. But Tresca—the least radical of any of the non-radical left anarchists of the last hundred years...makes you wonder what sort of message is behind it.

### Murray the grumpy pessimist or Anarchism today

Bookchin's *AMFL* was written before the Seattle anti-WTO events, so we can perhaps

forgive Murray for the extremely dreary pessimism of this statement: "These are the worst of times in the history of anarchism" (p.124). N30 was a watershed that has brought anarchists and anarchism renewed recognition in the political discourse of those who previously could ignore them. Bookchin dismisses visible, noisy anarchists like those in Seattle because they "are basically having fun" (p.125) by engaging in impolite street actions. That may be true; it sure looked like fun. But it is also true that most of the anarchists who were in Seattle (at least those not aligned with pacifists), were "basically" challenging the static tactics of protest-as-usual

# LIFE IS SHORT. THROW HARD.



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(sit down, get beaten up and/or arrested, watch it on TV, exaggerate self-importance in social change because of media attention). The renewed discussions and interest in things anarchic in the wake of these unapologetically radical anti-capitalist actions was brought about precisely through the actions of a dedicated group of "people who call themselves anarchists and...break windows...set garbage cans on fire, wave black flags" (p.124) instead of anonymously hanging on to the coattails of polite green or red reformists. What claims can Murray make about getting anarchism to be taken seriously?

But still, "Anarchism is in retreat today" (p.154). Amazingly, these times of "retreat" are not due to the repressive actions of capitalists or Leninists, the traditional enemies of anarchism. Instead, his creation (and

I willingly attribute its fabrication to Bookchin), the dreaded "lifestyle anarchist," is to blame for this disarray. We're doing it to ourselves (well, actually Murray says that every anarchist who isn't a Social Ecologist is doing it to him and his beloved ideology). Certainly none of this "retreat" could be due (wholly or in part) to the perception of anarchists and other interested people that Social Ecology and Libertarian Municipalism are irrelevant provincial pastimes best suited to the kids who gravitate to the Institute of Social Ecology ghetto of northwestern Vermont.

### Murray the Green or Where's the party?

Murray was proudly "involved with the German Greens when they began to organize as far back as the late 1970s and early 1980s," and "before the Greens became large organizations, one of the main points I emphasized was the importance of using a libertarian municipalist approach to politics." He also claims that he was "publicly arguing against their entry" (p.344) into German parliament. Like others before and since, the Greens refused to heed his advice. But he seems to have missed or ignored the tension between the *fundis* and *realos* that was present long before they took their seats in the German parliament for the first time in 1983.

The *fundis* (adherents to the fundamental principles of this "anti-party party") were more interested in the ecological policy issues that could be raised publicly and debated through electoral campaigns; the *realos* (those with a realistic political ambitions) were of the opinion that if they could get more Greens into the Bundestag, they would have a better chance of changing anti-ecological policies and implementing eco-friendly ones. The *fundis* were more interested in maintaining a principled oppositional posture, while the *realos* were always willing to form coalitions with other parties (the further intricacies of the strife within the Greens escape me).

Murray's pal from those early days, current Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (an original *realo*), is called "the former anarchist." Murray "knew...Fischer at a time when [he was] still [an] anarchist" (p.344). At which point did his status change? Fischer published the following characterization of Bookchin's irreplaceable decision-making procedure in 1983: direct democracy is "a green hell, as dangerous as the tropical rainforests of the Amazon" (quoted in *The Subversion of Politics* by George Katsiaficas, p.205). The utter contempt Fischer showed for this integral component of Libertarian Municipalism might have been expected to end their political association then and there, but the only indication we get from Bookchin

as to why Fischer is beyond the pale is that Murray was upset when his old buddy became environmental minister for the state of Hesse two years later, in December 1985. A further quote from Katsiaficas (pp.242-3) is in order here: "In 1980, Bookchin...referred to local activists [in the US] whose ideological affinity had nothing to do with anarchism...anarchists such as Bookchin apparently feel a compulsion to justify their political ideology through a presentation of political reality that is less than accurate."

Sure, Murray foresaw the danger that the Greens would "become corrupted" (p.344) through parliamentarianism, but any person committed to direct action could have (and did!) do what. What is Bookchin's analysis and conclusion from Green participation in perpetual electoral farces? Certainly not that parliamentary democracy should be avoided—just that a national level parliament should be avoided if there is no "basis in the local community" (p.344). His criticism of the German and American Greens is that they didn't use the "libertarian municipalist approach to politics." It is clear that Bookchin isn't interested in direct action; he's interested in directed action (he is the Director Emeritus of the Institute for Social Ecology, after all). Murray's support is not based on what the Greens (or others) did and do, but whether or not they follow his advice.

### Murray the democrat or This is for your own good

Analysts of the 1969 split in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) focus on the three-way tension between RYM 1 (Revolutionary Youth Movement One), RYM 2, and Progressive Labor (PL). But, according to Bookchin, "they seem not to know that there was a fourth faction: the Radical Decentralist Project. This was the faction that the *Anarchos* Group formed at the convention with the SDS members who supported our ideas...We formed a caucus and wrote a multipage statement...argued that SDS should address broader issues like ecology, community, libertarian forms of political organization...our caucus numbered about 250 members, approximately ten percent of the convention participants" (pp.100-1).

Usually what occurs after a split is what interests historians and analysts; each RYM eventually became another group (Weatherman and the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA), and PL became the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). What happened to the Radical Decentralist Project? "I gave up—I realized...that the Radical Decentralist Project would have to organize an alternative student movement" (p.102). Later in '69 came the

conference that was supposed to "provide an alternative to the dissolution of SDS, based on left-libertarian principles. All the conference had to do was write a statement...A perfectly good statement was already available for use: the *Anarchos* statement...but [it] was not used, nor was any other existing statement adopted that the group could have endorsed" (p.104).

So nothing happened with the Radical Decentralist Project. Perhaps this is the reason that no histories of SDS pay any attention to it; there's nothing to analyze. The SDS convention, where his caucus numbered perhaps as many as 10% of the whole

**If only SDS had paid attention to his group's project; if only the Black River folks had used his group's statement...if only people would just listen to Murray and follow his advice. Nobody likes a whiner, and complaints about everybody else are no substitute for looking in the mirror. Bookchin constantly laments that people didn't (and still won't) listen to him; maybe it's what he says or maybe it's the way he says it. In any case, his legacy is a string of failures.**

(for a majoritarian like Bookchin, such an insignificant minority must nowadays seem more like a nuisance than a conscience), was too busy with inter-Maoist onepersonship to "Listen, Marxist!" and the Black River conference participants wouldn't accept his group's "perfectly good statement." And that was the end of that. If only SDS had paid attention to his group's project; if only the Black River folks had used his group's statement...if only people would just listen to Murray and follow his advice. Nobody likes a whiner, and complaints about everybody else are no substitute for looking in the mirror. Bookchin constantly laments that people didn't (and still won't) listen to him; maybe it's what he says or maybe it's the way he says it. In any case, his legacy is a string of failures.

### Murray the racist or Black Power sucks

Bookchin has no problems with feminists: "I warmly supported the radical feminist movement" (p.116). On a generic level, feminism is the self-valorization and self-organization of women as women, independent from patriarchal patterns of subordination. As such, it isn't objectionable from an anarchist perspective, even if separatism comes to dominate its theory and practice;

after all, anarchists are in favor of self-organization. But when it comes to African-Americans who yearn for self-valorization and self-organization independent from racist patterns of subordination, well, that's a different story. The civil rights movement was fine: "In 1964 it demanded integration...When [Martin Luther] King [Jr.] said he wanted all of humanity to enjoy the benefits of freedom, his universalism appealed to the internationalism I had inherited from Marxism" (pp.64-5). Did it matter that this freedom and integration were to occur within a fully capitalist, white supremacist, and hierarchical framework? Apparently not.

"[A] distinctly anti-white attitude was emerging in the black movement...black people are only ten or twelve percent of the American population. It was vital for the civil rights movement to reach out to white America if it really wanted to realize its goal of equal opportunity...Black Power was a form of regressive particularism" (p.75). Equal opportunity for what? To be a wage laborer in an anti-labor environment? To be an owner/manager of a business with employees? To become a whole-hearted capitalist fully integrated into a capitalist economy? What about not wanting integration into this kind of socio-economic set-up? What about not wanting to rely on the bigoted assumption that black people aren't mature or intelligent enough to run their own lives? What about the principle of self-organization?

Bookchin, like other white snivel rights activists from the early '60s, feels betrayed by the eventual rejection of his help. When black folks decided that helping themselves was better than being helped by generous, well-meaning (but still patronizing) white people who felt guilty because of their privileges, the white folks felt abandoned. When white New Leftists then subordinated themselves to the revolutionary posturing of black militants, it was due to the paucity of their critical abilities and their guilt about "white skin privilege." It's not up to white people to decide when, how, and why black people (or any other non-white people) should agitate to better their own lives.

It is true, as Murray contends, that "Black Power groups began to say that the white man was the enemy" (p.76). Feminist separatists began saying that all men were the enemy at about the same time. The identification and categorization of biologically-based enemies is an ideological and philosophical problem of separatism, and as such it should be critiqued and challenged. This can be done without attacking the principle of self-organization which most separatist groups adopt (although the hierarchies that



usually appear in them can be critiqued from an antiauthoritarian perspective). But to take this critique and say that Black Power groups are "reactionary" (p.76), while at the same time ignoring feminist separatists, is totally unprincipled and sounds very much like racism. The accusation of racism is very serious, and I do not make it lightly, but what else can the reader conclude from Murray's vitriolic statements that are *exclusively* directed at Black Power ideologues, while radical feminist ideologues are let off the hook?

#### Murray the historian, Part I or Who cares about facts?

As anyone who knows me will attest, I am obsessed with the Spanish Revolution and Civil War. Murray the Historian relates the following: "In May 1937 in Barcelona, the workers had to conquer the Stalinist counterrevolution then and there. But they delayed, and after four days they had to leave the streets to obtain food—and they thereby surrendered whatever advantages they had gained" (pp.275-6). Murray the Historian completely ignores the Stalinist refusal to adhere to ceasefire agreements, and the calls of the CNT Ministers for anarchists to disarm themselves (what amounted to surrender), among other crucial explanatory details. The *cenetistas* (members of the CNT) and *faistas* (members of the FAI), along with their half-hearted allies in the POUM, lost the momentum in their fight against Stalinist treachery, surrendering their barricades to the counterrevolution... because they were *hungry*?!! In all the material on Spain that I've studied over the last 17 years, there is no mention of food as an issue leading to the anarchist defeat in Barcelona in '37. Murray the Historian's innovative analysis of the May Days is as unique as it is utterly ridiculous.

Pages 241-3 summarize the radical events of the beginning of January 1919 in Berlin, when, according to Bookchin, "the counter-revolution still lacked the effective military force it needed to suppress an uprising." (How and when he became an expert on military affairs is a mystery.) On January 5th, about 200,000 armed workers assembled in front of the Berlin police headquarters to protest the attempted dismissal of the Independent Socialist police president. Murray the Historian continues: "they were in a belligerent, indeed revolutionary mood. They waited expectantly...for their leaders—who had called the mobilization—to give them the signal to move. None was forthcoming" (p.242). But according to Richard M. Watt (*The Kings Depart; The Tragedy of Germany: Versailles and the German Revolution*, p.256), the leaders of the Independent Socialists, the

Communist Party, and the Revolutionary Shop Stewards "made a momentous decision: to call a general strike, to support an armed attack upon the government and 'to place Germany in the vanguard of the international proletarian revolution.'" The coalition of the three revolutionary organizations put out a manifesto to that effect, and immediately set about distributing arms. Murray the Historian writes, "The next day...another appeal to take to the streets was distributed among the workers, and the same numerically huge mass of armed workers reappeared, once again ready for an uprising...but the leaders still behaved indecisively...By nightfall

**Bookchin is certainly not the first or only anarchist to promote an authoritarian agenda for anarchists, but his is the most recent and most vocal example. Like other anarchists who evolved out of leftism, Bookchin looks back with wistful nostalgia to the good old days of ideological certainty and resolute leadership; when youngsters had unquestioning respect for their elders, and the leaders didn't tolerate independent thought or analysis among the rabble of activists.**

[of the 6th]...the crowd dispersed, never to return" (p.243). Watt writes, however, that the general strike began on schedule, that armed workers succeeded in capturing the offices of several newspapers, and by the morning of the 7th (12 hours after Murray the Historian says they'd dispersed), had taken over the Brandenburg Gate, putting riflemen in offensive positions across the top of the structure. In addition, "The Government Printing Office had been seized, as had the most important of the railroad stations. The revolutionaries took over and fortified the huge Boetow Brewery. The Reichstag building was under attack and defended only by a scratch force of government bureaucrats" (Watt, p.257-8). Doesn't sound like any kind of "dispersed" crowd to me.

Murray the Historian claims that "many historians" consider that "the German Revolution came to an end on January 6, 1919, when the last of the two working-class mobilizations melted away" (p.243). Who are these historians who suppose that a revolution can be finished between the decision to call a general strike and the time it actually begins to make gains? We'll never know; but I suspect that, if they actually exist, most (if not all) of them are Leninists. Another historical to unknown piece of crucial historical data is later uncovered by Murray the Historian: "most of [the] members" of the Spartacus-

bund (Spartacus League) "were actually syndicalists and anarchists!" (p.297). Where he got this information is anybody's guess. One of the advantages (for demagogues like Bookchin) of using an oral history format is that the storyteller doesn't need to be bothered with stupid things like citing sources that others can check.

#### Murray the historian, Part II or Are we democratic centralists yet?

Bookchin claims that dithering and indecision led to the failure of the German Revolution, that the armed proletarians of Berlin gave up without a fight because of a lack of resolute leadership. The fact that no other revolutionaries were coming to Berlin to reinforce the 10% of the people that was armed and in favor of the general strike (Watt suggests a total population of a little more than two million), coupled with the quick mobilization of the homocidally counterrevolutionary and Social Democrat-sponsored *Freikorps* on the 9th and 10th (highly mobile and having the advantage of superior arms and combat experience), adds up to an unwinnable military situation.

But even if it were true that this failure was due, as Murray the Historian insists, to "the disorganized and indecisive revolutionary leaders bickering, delay[ing], and act[ing] late and irresolutely" (p.244), one might think that the lesson for antiauthoritarians would be that workers and others interested in revolution should become accustomed to thinking on their own and taking bold initiatives instead of wasting time waiting for leaders to make decisions for them. But no; Murray the Historian is also Murray the Leninoid Vanguardist: "Those who wish to overthrow this vast system will require the most careful strategic judgment, the most profound theoretical understanding, and the most dedicated and persistent organized, revolutionary groups...They will need nothing less than...a well-organized and institutionalized endeavor led by knowledgeable and resolute people who will foment mass resistance and revolution, advance a coherent program, and unite their groups in a visible and identifiable confederation" (p.241).

From an antihierarchical and antiauthoritarian perspective, calling for a well-organized movement (militarized with commissars?), a profound theoretical understanding (generated by the founders?), knowledgeable and resolute leaders (who can create, maintain, and enforce an ideological program?), and an institutionalized endeavor (a self-perpetuating and self-preserving bureaucratic apparatus?) is exceedingly suspicious and disturbing, if not unacceptable.

able. Coupled with his critique of irresolute leadership (rather than the more traditional anarchic critique of leadership itself), the analysis of Murray the Historian could just as well be the analysis of Murray the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Northeastern Regional Federation of the American Social Ecologist Party (Bolshevik).

Murray's platform makes clear that his thoughts continue to be filtered through the lens of the Marxist-Leninist politics into which he was indoctrinated in his youth. Bookchin is certainly not the first or only anarchist to promote an authoritarian agenda for anarchists, but his is the most recent and most vocal example. Like other anarchists who evolved out of leftism, Bookchin looks back with wistful nostalgia to the good old days of ideological certainty and resolute leadership, when youngsters had unquestioning respect for their elders, and the leaders didn't tolerate independent thought or analysis among the rabble of activists.

#### Murray the organizer or Authoritarian anarchism

Throughout the history of anarchism, there have been factions of rivalry and intense competition concerning its multifarious manifestations. Any search for "the most profound theoretical understanding" with the goal of creating a "revolutionary libertarian socialist movement" (emphasis in original) is a snipe hunt, with anarcho-demagogues trying to find the elusive unifying set of principles for theoretical and philosophical truth, or a "coherent program" (p.241). In a real snipe hunt the organizers know that the hunt is a hoax; but anarcho-unifiers continue to hoodwink themselves and the uninitiated, pointing their fingers at the followers of every other anarcho-tendency, accusing them of wrecking the non-existent movement. But it is exactly this ephemeral search for programmatic unity that is sectarian and divisive. There has never been a unified anarchist movement, and there most likely never will be. Some antiauthoritarians think this open-ended quality of anarchy is one of the strengths of anarchic practice, that a lack of enforceable unity is perfectly fine.

This is not to say that anarchist theory is (or should be) a haphazard do-it-yourself amalgam of whatever ideas seem best at the moment. As Bob Black writes, "The word means something, after all, and what it means is denial of the necessity and desirability of government." (*Anarchy After Leftism*, p. 76) Over the years, there have been anarchists who've desired a unitary platform and an enormous international (con)federation; all such attempts have resulted either in acrimonious splits or dissolution due to lack of interest. Some anarchists think this is mournfully regrettable, while others suspect it is inevitable.

Bookchin is willfully ignoring the lessons of (even recent) anarchist history if he thinks that the parochial ideology of Social Ecology/Libertarian Municipalism could be the "coherent program" that will be the principle for any kind of anarchist organization.

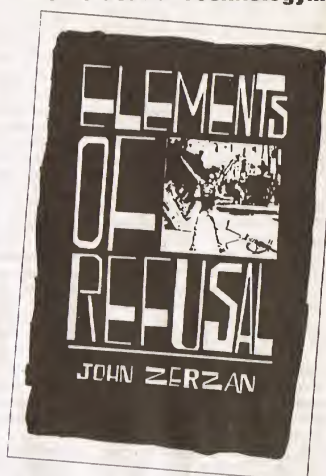
#### Murray the authoritarian anarchist or Thus endeth the lesson

There is, unfortunately, such a thing as authoritarian anarchism. It's easy enough to describe it with the shortcut term *anarcho-leftism*. Aside from the Love and Rage (R.I.P.) folks, Murray and his pals at the Institute for Social Ecology are among its

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most recent public proponents. Altogether, they are relatively few, but because they correctly sense their decreasing relevance to the future of antiauthoritarian thought and practice (as anarchists continue to move away from the political dead end of leftism), they are relentlessly loud and nasty in their denunciations of non-leftist anarchists. Their various projects of resolute, knowledgeable leadership and institutionalized organizationalism are almost certainly self-defeating. But that's no reason why the rest of us can't help them along.

#### Who Killed Ned Ludd?... Unionization in America... The Refusal of Technology...



"Everyone can feel the nothingness, the void, just beneath the surface of everyday routines and securities." -from the Preface

*Elements of Refusal* is the first collection of John Zerzan's writings—and this Second Edition of the collection is long overdue. No less than as they first appeared, these essays are provocative and important.

Present day "reality," as constituted by those with vested interests in maintaining this domination, is touted as the "best" possible reality. Accordingly, history is shaped like a monstrous land-fill to legitimize this hoax.

Daily life, with its intensifying alienations and psychopathology becomes more spectacular and bizarre. *All is not well in Utopia*. We grow more dependent on glitter and diversion to fill the void where all that is human is gutted. Life is reduced to a game. *But there is nowhere to play*. Every technological innovation promising to bring us closer together drives us further apart, every revolution promises to liberate us from want, but leaves us more in need.

*Elements of Refusal* spells it all out. Here it is axiomatic that art, language, time, industrialism, number, technology, work and other aspects of our social lives—all hailed as the liberators of humanity—are, in fact, the co-conspirators of domestication and domination.

**Columbia Alternative Library**  
**C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions**  
POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205  
\$14.95 + \$2.05 p&h = \$17.00 total



*Anarchy is once again exchanging with all other anarchist and genuinely radical (anti-state, anti-capitalist) periodicals. And we will continue to try to review all such periodicals received in future issues. All reviews in this issue are by Jason McQuinn, except those marked [LJ] for Lawrence Jarach.*

*Publishers please note: To ensure that your publications are reviewed in future issues, send all zines and magazines to our current reviewer address: C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA.*

#### ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST REVIEW: Formerly Libertarian Labor Review

#26/Fall 99 through #28/Spring 2000 (POB 2824, Champaign, IL 61825) has a new title, a newly glossy cover and a new quarterly publishing schedule, but at the same time has now been reduced to 34-pages. The Fall issue includes part two of an interview with prominent libertarian socialist, Noam Chomsky, in which he unwittingly reveals that he is unfamiliar with Murray Bookchin's scurrilous attacks on anarchists in recent years, while he also makes a case that he opposes support for national liberation movements. The Fall issue also includes coverage of anarcho-syndicalism in Mexico, France and Germany. The Winter issue features a "Chomsky Symposium," in which ASR editors criticize Chomsky's more and more obvious tendencies toward defense of social democratic reformism. And the Spring issue features reprints of articles on the Seattle WTO protests (including an excerpt from *We Dare Be Free* and Loren Goldner's decent account titled "The First U.S. Riot against 'Globalization'"), along with an overview of several "Syndicalist Utopias" by Jon Bekken. A magazine for those who believe there is still some life in the ideal of anarchist industrial unions. Subscriptions have increased to (a still quite reasonable) \$15/4 issues.

#### BARK!

**Voice of Anarcho-Cynicism**  
#1/Spring 2000 (POB 738, New York, NY 10025) is a brand new 12-page zine for "Defacing the Currency of Civilization"—in the Cynical language of Diogenes of Sinope. For such a small package in rather small type this zine is full of good writing and wide-ranging, philosophical thoughts on ecology, agriculture, technology, critical theory, ancient Cynical philosophy and hunter-gatherer peoples, all in one long essay. The relatively high quality writing only

## Anarchist press review

Compiled by Jason McQuinn & Lawrence Jarach

breaks down towards the end of the essay, when a moralistic idealism begins to creep in with fairly wild claims such as one that in the "true Golden Age, the true state of nature, which we should take as our pattern for utopia..." humanity was vegan. (Not only was humanity not likely vegan, but even if it was predominantly vegan, there is zero evidence that it would have been so on moral grounds, nor would it make any sense for us to model our diet on past societies for moral reasons.) Still, all in all this is an excellent read and will be well worth picking up for most people. There's no price listed, but I'd send \$1 for a sample copy; subscriptions are \$6/year.

#### DEMOCRACY & NATURE:

**International Journal of Inclusive Democracy**  
Vol. 4, #2-3 [double-issue]/undated through Vol. 5, #3/Nov. 99 [editorial: 20 Woodberry Way, London N12 0HG, UK; ordering: Carfax Publishing, Taylor & Francis Ltd, Cust Services Dept, 47 Runway Rd Suite G, Levittown, PA 19057-4700] is a 160-page academic journal (formerly *Society and Nature*) which seeks to create a radical democratic synthesis of traditions of socialist (economic), political and ecological democracy, placing it on the borderline of anarchist theory shared with anti-state environmentalist, directly democratic and libertarian socialist positions. The Vol. 4, #2-3 double-issue covers "Irrationalism, Religion, Ecology and Democracy." The November '99 issue on "Welfare and Democracy," includes the publishers' (Takis Fotopoulos) essay "Welfare state or Economic Democracy?" and essays on aspects of "Ecology and Ethics" by Dario Padovan, Serge Latouche and Dirk Holemans. Most interesting for most non-academic anarchists will be the draft version of an essay by John Clark (which raised Murray Bookchin's irrational ire at a social ecology conference a few years ago) titled "The Politics of Social Ecology: Beyond the Limits of the City." Unfortunately, the journal is marred by the editor/publisher's insistence on getting in the first and last word on everything discussed in every is-

sue. Subscriptions are \$58/year or £36/year.



#### GENTLE SPIRIT

Vol. 6, #10/undated (POB 246, Wauna, WA 98395; web site: [www.gentlespirit.com](http://www.gentlespirit.com); e-mail: [GSCustServ@aol.com](mailto:GSCustServ@aol.com)) is a nicely-produced, 90-page Christian pacifist magazine published by anarchists, with an entirely appropriate title. (I say "Christian pacifist" because there is little evidence within the magazine that the editor-publishers allow their anarchism to show through.) This issue includes articles on simple living, organic farming, community supported agriculture, homestead tips, recipes, homestead tips, home schooling and unschooling articles, and advice on non-coercive parenting. These are all fine things, but I would generally expect a little more explicit social critique from anarchist periodicals of just about any kind. The closest thing to coverage of political or anti-political issues is an essay by one of the editor-publishers, Cheryl Seelhoff, on Gospel-based pacifism and non-resistance. In a separate letter, Cheryl states that she shares Jacques "Elulu's" theory that Jesus was an anarchist. I find this magazine most valuable for its non-coercive parenting and unschooling stances (both of which I share). Subscriptions are \$22/year (11 issues).

#### GREEN ANARCHY:

**For a Free Society in Harmony and Nature**  
#1/Summer 2000 (POB 11331,

Eugene, OR 97440; e-mail: [greenanarchy@tao.ca](mailto:greenanarchy@tao.ca)) is the new, 16-page tabloid, North American counterpart to the U.K.'s *Green Anarchist*. Content includes anarchist and ecological protest coverage: April demos in Washington DC, the March 16 anti-cop riot in Montréal, opposition to the continuing NYC police shootings, Oslo squatters, etc. This first issue also features "An Introduction to Primitive Anarchy" by John Zerzan, an unusual (serve-the-people type) exhortation titled "Why Aren't More People of Color in the Anarchist Movement?" by 'New African anarchist prisoner' Ali Khalid Abdullah, and Chaia Heller's call to follow Bookchin's Libertarian Municipalist ideology in "This is What Democracy Looks Like: The Revolutionary Potential of the Anti-Globalization Movement." Sample copies are \$2 (\$3 in Canada); subscriptions are \$10/5 issues.

#### JE NE SAIS QUOI

#6/undated (POB 2407, Springfield, IL 62705) is a nicely-produced, 12-page local anarchist zine for the Springfield, Illinois area. This issue includes an interview with Ron Sakolsky about his participation in the DC April 16th anti-IMF protests, a review of *The Golden Book of Springfield*. Sample copies are available for a 55¢, large-sized SASE or \$1 each.

#### THE MATCH!

#94/Summer '99 (POB 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702) is an irregularly-published 64-page anarchist journal, lovingly self-printed by always cantankerous—but increasingly loony—editor/publisher Fred Woodworth. The articles in every issue focus on the rampant abuses heaped upon innocent people by authoritarian institutions, especially by cops, courts and prisons, along with criticisms of the authoritarian and labor-increasing effects of computer technologies. This issue criticizes Tom Tomorrow's "This Modern World" comic series (for its increasing defense of government institutions), mainstream newspaper hypocrisy concerning free speech and press freedom, media complicity with the so-called "war on [illegal] drugs," and the continuing record of police executions and beatings of generally innocent people (not that those "guilty" in the eyes of the state deserve such treatment), as well as some of Noam Chomsky's statements supporting the use of government against corporations. Paul Roasberry contributes an interesting, critical account of the Columbine High School shootings titled

"Living in Littleton: Columbine, Christians and Cops," while Iris Lane tries to explain why she has been (somewhat guiltily) "Listening to Limbaugh"—but now is beginning to understand what sort of demagogic propagandist creep he really is (though her alternative is to recommend listening to ex-CIA scumbag G. Gordon Liddy!). Every issue also includes a ritual denunciation of *Anarchy* magazine for imaginary, often ludicrous crimes. Subscriptions are now free; donations are requested.

#### Non-English-language materials received

#### CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES SUR L'ANARCHISME BULLETIN

#56/Fév. 2000 (Bibliothèque du C.I.R.A., avenue de Beaumont 24, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland) is a 26-page catalog of periodicals and new book acquisitions by the CIRA archive in various languages, predominantly French and Spanish. This issue includes a bibliography of works by the late Arthur Lehning (a former AIT secretary and translator of six volumes of

Mikhail Bakunin's collected works, who died last year at the age of 100). Subscriptions are 10 FF/year.

**CNT: Organ of the National Confederation of Labor**  
#259/June 2000 (Box 4040, 18080 Granada, Spain) Articles on lots of May First activities, including a congress in Almeria that brought together mostly ignored immigrant workers, a demo against a military exhibition in Barcelona, an analysis of the recent student strike in Mexico City, an interview with a couple of libertarian educators, a translation of "The People's Flag is Deepest Black" from Black Flag, and an editorial about armed struggle in Latin America. In Spanish. 200 pesetas. [LJ]

#### DIABOLO IN CORPO: Rivista Di Critica Sociale

No. 2/May 2000 (Maria Grazia Scoppetta, C.P. 1301, 10100 Torino, Italy) Smaller by only a few pages from the first issue, number two is jammed with articles like "The Legend of the Jubilee" surrounding Johann Most's famous

"The Pestilence of Religion," "The Cruel Jaws of Habit; Enigma, Knowledge and Revolt," "The Experiments of Science," a translation of William Morris' "Era of Substitution" and John Zerzan's "That Thing We Do," rounded off with an article on Dada and celebration of anarchist bomber Emile Henry's poetry. Again, plenty of unattributed graphics lifted from this magazine. Published in Italian. 6000 lire. [LJ]

#### EKINTZA ZUZENA

No. 27/Summer 2000 (Ediciones E.Z., Apdo. 235, 48080 Bilbao, Bizkaia/Spain) An article called "Basque Disobedience; Civil Disobedience as a Strategy of National Liberation" is the second longest essay in this issue. Also included are articles on Seattle, organic farming land occupation near Madrid, the support of the Franco regime for the Nazis, and a translation of a pamphlet from England called "Reflections on June 18. Contributions on the politics behind the events that occurred in the City of London on June 18, 1999" which is highly

critical of street activism. Plus lots of music and zine reviews. In Spanish and Euskara (Basque). 400 pesetas. Subscriptions in the US are \$20.00. [LJ]

#### SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA: Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor in Catalonia

No. 303/June 2000 (Hospital 101, 08001 Barcelona, Spain) Reports on May First demos, anti-torture activities, the land occupation outside Madrid, imprisoned Greek anarchists on hunger strike, South American labor action. With a back page on Catalan cultural issues. In Spanish and Catalan. 100 pesetas. [LJ]

#### SOCIAL HARMONY

#20/Spring 2000 (POB 76148, T.K. 17110 Nea Smyrni Athens, Greece) is an sober-looking (no photos or illustrations) 8-page, Greek-language periodical including in this issue a translation from Petr Kropotkin's *Act for Yourself* titled "Are We Good Enough?" Send a contribution for a sample copy.

## A small selection of anarchist/alternative Web sites

Compiled by Alex Trotter

I can't make any pretense to putting together a comprehensive list that would cover everything of interest to anarchists and their friends. These sites all have their own lists of linked sites, so the adventure of exploration is yours, if you feel that the Internet/WWW has any value (and not all anarchists do). From time to time I'll add sites to this list, or correct addresses that have changed or disappeared.

Spunk Press Anarchist Archives  
[www.spunk.org](http://www.spunk.org)

"USENET groups and mailing lists of interest to anarchists"  
[flag.blackened.net/liberty/11ists.html](http://flag.blackened.net/liberty/11ists.html)

Blackout Books (New York City)  
[www.panix.com/~blackout/index.html](http://www.panix.com/~blackout/index.html)

Mid-Atlantic Infoshop (anarchist librarians, pirate radio, and much more)  
[burn.ucsd.edu/~mai](http://burn.ucsd.edu/~mai)

Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade  
[world.std.com/~bbrigade](http://world.std.com/~bbrigade)

Max Stirner-related material  
[pierce.ee.washington.edu/~david/egoist/stirner](http://pierce.ee.washington.edu/~david/egoist/stirner)

Zerowork  
[www.whywork.org/about/links.html](http://www.whywork.org/about/links.html)

AUT-OP-SY (autonomist and ultraleft Marxism)  
[lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/aut\\_html](http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/aut_html)

GreenNet  
[www.gn.apc.org](http://www.gn.apc.org)

Situationist archive  
[www.nothingness.org/SI/index.html](http://www.nothingness.org/SI/index.html)

The Daily Bleed (sinners and saints galore)  
[www.eskimo.com/~recall/bleed/calmast.html](http://www.eskimo.com/~recall/bleed/calmast.html)

Emperor Norton  
[www.notfrisco.com/nortoniana](http://www.notfrisco.com/nortoniana)

Victor Serge  
[users.skynet.be/johneden](http://users.skynet.be/johneden)

Cornelius Castoriadis  
[aleph.lib.ohio-state.edu/~bcas/castoriadis/index2.html](http://aleph.lib.ohio-state.edu/~bcas/castoriadis/index2.html)

Wilhelm Reich  
[www.orgone.org](http://www.orgone.org)

Society for Human Sexuality  
[www.sexuality.org](http://www.sexuality.org)

Surrealist writers  
[www.creative.net/~alang/lit/surreal/writers.sht](http://www.creative.net/~alang/lit/surreal/writers.sht)

Dada movement  
[www.mital-u.ch/Dada/](http://www.mital-u.ch/Dada/)

New Social & Cultural Movements  
[www.lancs.ac.uk/users/csec/shiftingground/](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/csec/shiftingground/)

Communitas (news around the world)  
[www.ecn.org/communitas/](http://www.ecn.org/communitas/)

The Post-Technology Project  
[redtrial.com/ptech/](http://redtrial.com/ptech/)

Bindistiff Family Circus (erotic fire shows, sword swallows, bug eaters, etc.)  
[www.bindistiff.org/](http://www.bindistiff.org/)

Witches, wiccans and pagans  
[www.witchvox.com](http://www.witchvox.com)

Geostrategic and intelligence (spook) stuff  
[www.stratfor.com](http://www.stratfor.com); [www.sif-us.com](http://www.sif-us.com)

Independent Media Center (WTO-related material)  
206.168.174.21

Cyberpunks home page  
[ftp://ftp.cs.berkeley.edu/pub/cyberpunks/Home.html](http://ftp.cs.berkeley.edu/pub/cyberpunks/Home.html)

List of anonymous remailers  
[www.cs.berkeley.edu/~raph/remailer-list.html](http://www.cs.berkeley.edu/~raph/remailer-list.html)



# Montreal Anarchist Demo Suppressed with 157 Arrests on May Day

by Michael William

In the past, Montreal's May 1 has been an at times interesting but usually pretty boring day. Typically the unions hold a march that is followed by an event in a hall. Anarchists at the demo are relegated to the rear and are expected not to act up. One May 1st I saw an anarchist who was walking in the wrong part of the cortege have his black flag yanked away by a security goon who threw it to the ground.

At a Mayday demo in the early '80s the anarchists made a minor sensation when they left their place in the procession and ran alongside it with large black flags flapping, coming finally to a halt in a park. The next day a front-page article on anarchism appeared in a Montreal daily. Pieces on anarchists can be nasty, nice or "neutral" depending on the moods of journalists and editors and the degree of anarchist scare at the moment.

On Mayday 1999 a demo in support of legalizing pot took place, much to the chagrin of some radicals who fumed at this neo-hippy recuperation of May 1. So it comes as no surprise that this year not one but three demos took place: the usual union one, a Reclaim the Streets demo, and a specifically anarchist one. I didn't know quite where I stood with respect to this profusion of demos. I have been to a number of May-day demos but my presence at these things is by no means automatic. I ultimately wound up sick this time, so choosing became unnecessary.

## Hide and seek in Westmount

The specifically anarchist demo was announced with several different posters and flyers. Most were signed "des libertaires" (the French word *libertaire* doesn't have the right-wing connotation it sometimes has in English). From the tone of the posters the organizers seemed to be coming from the libertarian-communist milieu, which indeed turned out to be the case.

The demo rally point was a downtown subway station. Nearby, four yellow school buses stood parked. Gradually about 200 demonstrators showed up, some wearing masks or carrying flags. Cops were much in evidence—to the tune of two dozen police vehicles.

People were asked to board the buses. The buses pulled away. An organizer on each of the buses announced that the destination was Quebec's richest neighbourhood,



Mayday demonstrators before the arrests.

Westmount. Westmount is located on the flank of Mount Royal, a big hill adjacent to downtown Montreal. The organizers stated that it would be unwise to attempt illegal activities because of the large police presence and the unfamiliarity of the terrain to most protesters.

The buses wound up the side of Mount Royal and into Westmount. Some of the demonstrators yelled out comments or insults to the rare locals on the streets. The buses were preceded and followed by a heavy contingent of cops on motorcycles and other vehicles.

The buses arrived at a lookout point perched at the top of Westmount. The demonstrators disembarked and the buses departed. People took in the panoramic view of the downtown core and the Saint Lawrence River just behind it. A couple of small mountains were visible in the distance. For several minutes people milled around. An organizer with a megaphone then suggested the demo get underway. The road in the direction he wished to go, though, was suddenly blocked by a line of riot cops. People attempted to go in the opposite direction. But the road that way was blocked by another line of cops.

A feeling of panic took hold as people realized they were hemmed in. The only

escape route seemed to be down some stairs and down a winding path to a street below in Upper Westmount, the neighbourhood's poshest part. Some of the demonstrators followed the path while others scrambled down more directly through the bushes and undergrowth. Following the descent, people regrouped on the street. At this point several graffiti—circle @s or anti-bourgeois slogans—were spray-painted.

Chanting slogans, the demonstrators headed down the street. However, several blocks into the march a line of cops materialized ahead of the protesters. People moved in the opposite direction but again the cops were coming from that way too. Some demonstrators attempted to cut through a back yard. Escape was made unlikely though by a long drop to the street on the other side of the back wall. Cops were already visible below. Sixty people remained crammed into a small space in the back yard and the rest of the demonstrators were encircled by cops on the street out in front. The cops allowed no one to leave.

People were forced to cool their heels in the cold drizzle for several hours until they were processed (photographed), put into cramped paddy wagons, and taken to the copshop. 157 arrests took place, meaning that about a quarter of the demonstrators got



View from the lookout point where the bus let off the protesters.

away. One person was severely injured trying to escape and another had a gun drawn on him by a cop. One person hid for several hours in a park and managed to avoid cops who were scouring the area.

In the cells the mood was generally upbeat as people chatted, relaxed or slept. Although most of the arrested were let out within hours, ten were kept longer and were arraigned the next day. It was claimed that the ten had been singled out because of their previous judicial records.

The cops meanwhile were putting forth their version of why the arrests had taken place. The demonstrators had been unwilling to collaborate with the police, a police commander told a local daily. Further justifications were contained in the official police report. These included the handful of graffiti and what the cops described as the "aggressive attitude of the demonstrators." The

report also states that a motorcycle cop was attacked by one of the demonstrators. According to an eyewitness, one person did charge toward a cop on a stationary motorcycle. The bike was knocked over but the cop didn't go down. In the police report the incident is blown out of proportion, and in any case the person in question, by all accounts very drunk, was straggling well behind the main body of protesters: his gesture hardly constitutes an excuse for arresting everyone present.

Following the arrests, participants were able to put together a list of telephone numbers of those who had been detained.

Since then several defendants meetings have taken place. Most of the defendants have decided to undertake a collective defence. Several benefits have also been held, bringing in over \$1,000.00 towards legal expenses.

## The media

Unsurprisingly, the media primarily parroted the police version of events. A radio news report on state-run Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) on the morning after the demo even talked of a "riot" having occurred. But on May 3 the tone of the media noticeably changed. This was due to uproar over the arrests of several media people during the demo. (Now that *their* ox was getting gored the media had snapped awake). The journalists and photographers said that they were arrested in spite of having identified themselves as media people. And a local daily published a photo of one of the journalists glumly flashing his press pass through a cordon of helmeted cops. Quebec's federation of professional journalists also got into the act, issuing a statement which demanded that the police conduct an



## International Anarchist News

enquiry and apologize to the arrested journalists and photographers. Eventually the charges against a journalist and a photographer were dropped. The charges against the other photographers—and of course the demonstrators—would remain.

### Debate

The Mayday demo and the arrests have contributed to an ongoing debate about goals and tactics. Some anarchists avoided the demo or felt it was poorly organized while others thought it worthwhile despite the problems. My own hesitations are concerned less with tactics than other issues. The Montreal demo was a response to a call on the Internet for radical anti-authoritarian actions on Mayday. But to what extent do we need to be reacting to calls on the Internet to begin with? Surely there are more spontaneous and organic ways of going about things. Must we all herd off in the same direction simply because someone puts up a text on a website or sends out some e-mails?

As well, Mayday remains mainly the domain of the left, an event steeped in a Guevara-like mist of myth. Union bureaucrats, leftist groupuscules, social democrats, neo-Stalinists: each faction has its spin on why May 1 represents the aspirations of its gang. Some of course will say that the point is to organize specifically anarchist demos or anarchist contingents in existing events. But in this case why May 1? Anarchist demos can be held 365 days of the year, most of which are free of the baggage associated with Mayday.

And although Westmount is a legitimate target, calling a symbolic demo in Westmount is easier than the more daunting task of tracing modern domination's metamorphosis. In today's world of cybernetics and gene-splitting, domination has become more diffuse: a computer program living in a condo is as much a part of the megamachine as the classic industrialist living in Westmount.

### State television does a number on the anarchists

The Westmount demo had an additional rebound when it was used as the starting point for a special program on anarchism and violence on the French-language channel of the CBC. Much of the interviewing for the program took place at the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair which occurred six days after the Mayday arrests. Some of the people who were asked questions thought they were being interviewed about the book fair or about the radical milieu in a more general sense—until it became clear that questions were being single-mindedly directed toward the subject of violence. The people behind the program also had another card up their



One Mayday demonstrator being arrested.

sleeve. Instead of enlisting profs, politicians or police chiefs to denounce the anarchists, the producers interviewed two high-profile ideologues of non-violence who have a history of denouncing revolutionary insurrectionists.

The program begins with shots of chanting demonstrators at the Westmount demo. A demonstrator is shown being arrested and then coming out of the back of a paddy wagon. The voice-over presents him as one of the "leaders" of the Montreal anarchists. He is then shown being interviewed at the book fair about the reasons for the Westmount demo.

The program then shifts to another activist and to the March 15, 2000 anti-police brutality demo at which a copshop, a bank and three McDonald's had their windows smashed. The activist is inaccurately identified as a member of the anti-police-brutality group which organized the demo. Shots are shown of people attacking a McDonald's as the voice-over deplores the "vandalism committed by some demonstrators." But despite the heavy spin, some will no doubt reach their own conclusions about these dramatic shots; the "spectacle" at times escapes those who manufacture it. The inaccurately identified activist is then interviewed along with another person. Asked whether violence can be a useful tool, the activist says that the issue is more one of self-defence. The other person interviewed then makes a distinction between property destruction and violence against individuals.

These, however, can be slippery distinctions. In the words of the author of an article in *Willful Disobedience* that deals precisely with this issue, "We have no reason to try to

make such artificial distinctions, since our actions are defined precisely by our desire to attack and destroy power. These distinctions between 'violence' and 'nonviolence' or between 'legitimate self-defence' and the violence of attack are based on the hypocritical morality of power that serves no other purpose than to place weighted chains on our ability to act."

Next in the program come the interviews with the pacifists. First up is Philippe Duhamel, probably Montreal's best known proponent of non-violent civil disobedience. In an interview Duhamel has referred to the Seattle window smashers as "small groups of provocateurs" whom he insinuated elsewhere were paid by the police. He is also one of four signers of a text which trashes the Seattle window-smashers. The text was sent out on the Internet and was published in the Canadian anarchist journal *Kick it Over*. The initiator of the document, Scott Weinstein, worked in Montreal anarchist projects during the '70s but stopped calling himself an anarchist many years ago. Weinstein has also penned a text which upbraids the Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc which was at the April 2000 Washington demo. Among other complaints he objected to the Bloc organizers' statement that "one nation-state is as bad as any other nation-state" and that all of them should be abolished. The U.S. is "far more evil," opines Weinstein, than, say, Cuba! More recently he was quoted as saying that the use of pepper spray should be replaced with "good police work." This former anarchist clearly has no problem with the cops as such. In another interview he states that today's protest groups are specifically non-violent. When



Cover of a local Montreal zine, *Le Poing D'Exclamation*, following the arrests.

he's not trashing non-pacifists, he pretends we don't exist.

But back to the program's interview with Duhamel. "There are certain sectors which advocate violence" he states, and "for a lot of groups that causes a problem." Violence will frighten and alienate people, he says. Duhamel in other words feels that non-pacifists are a threat to him and his plans and must thus be discredited and destroyed. In Seattle, though, it was people doing CD who triggered the cops' over-reaction, not the later window-smashing. Those not participating in the CD could thus complain in a similar manner that it was the actions of the non-violent CD people which triggered police repression against them.

Next the program presents shots of people being arrested during a Montreal CD action while Duhamel shouts instructions to the troops. The narrator states in an approving tone that the militants of Duhamel's organization are pacifists. The desired contrast is thus obtained between the CD people (good) and the violent anarchists (bad).

Next another well-known non-violent activist, Yves Manseau, is interviewed. Like Duhamel, Manseau pulls no punches. What he terms infiltrators have committed "gratuitous violence" at demos he was involved in organizing, he says, and his right to self-expression was taken away as a result, though why this was the case remains unclear.

## International Anarchist News

Duhamel then gets the final word. Non-violent actions reduce repression, he says, and violent ones do the opposite. He then accuses non-pacifists of trying to turn the state into as much of a police state as possible. Non-violent groups such as his will be negatively affected as a result, he repeats.

There is little evidence, however, that local groups advocate a policy of court-ing repression. This is just more misrepresentation on Duhamel's part. On the other hand repression will no doubt accompany resistance which truly threatens the state—which set-piece CD actions do not; they may cause temporary disruption but are otherwise easily contained and neutralized. But if Duhamel is not a threat to the powers that be, his popular-fronting with the mainstream media is a threat to insurrectionists and other radicals.

Not content with verbal attacks, Operation SaAMI (Duhamel's group) also wishes to neutralize sundry uncontrollables on the ground. The organization has distributed a flyer about the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas Summit which will take place in Quebec City in April 2001. The flyer contains the following statement: "To build participatory democracy we need trust, we need assurances that nobody—simply because he/she

'feels like it' or wants to 'show us the way'—will take it upon themselves to hurt other people or put our lives at risk through some irresponsible act of destruction or violence."

Much could be said about this convoluted sentence. In an Orwellian manner, "participatory democracy" is invoked to deny the participation of those the organization doesn't agree with. For SaAMI the desires of actually existing individuals are subordinated to abstractions and moralism. However, there is no need for us to either glorify or demonize violence. Violence is simply one possibility, a possibility which cannot be simply ruled out. Without an uprising in July 1936—certainly a violent act—the Spanish Revolution (incomplete as it was) would not have taken place.

The SaAMI worldview is one which leaves us defenceless. Cops can club people over the head but protecting oneself is ruled out because it would be "hurting other people" if a cop happened to get injured.

### Anarchists and the media

In Montreal the TV program has added to a continuing discussion about whether anarchists should collaborate with the mainstream media or the corporate-controlled "alternative media." It is a debate which is not limited to Montreal. In the U.S. John Zerzan has been able to reach thousands (in edited form) through interviews on the electronic media or in high-profile dailies such as the *New York Times*. It can be argued that in this way he has gotten basic anti-civilization ideas out to many who would otherwise be unaware of them.

In an article in a new journal called *Killing King Abacus*, on the other hand, it is advocated that we shun the media which is characterized in the following manner: "It is the creator of images for consumption. It creates celebrities and personalities for people to look up to and vicariously live through. It creates role images for people to imitate in order to invent their 'identity.' It creates images of events separated from and placed above life. It is through these images, ingested uncritically, that people are to view and interpret the world, formulating their opinions out of this virtual unreality. To the extent that the media succeeds, the result is a passive, predictable population consuming the trash dished out by the social order."

According to the article, "If we take self-determination and self-activity as fundamental bases for anarchist practice, the way to communicate our ideas is clearly to create our own means of communication. Graffiti, posters, communiqués, papers, magazines and pirate radio can all be used to express anarchist ideas without putting them through the masticating mechanisms of the media."

In my own case, I don't collaborate with the mainstream media, but am less harshly critical of those that do than some.



Benefit flyer for those arrested.



## Irish eyewitness report on the S26 demonstration in Prague

*This is a personal report on the demonstrations in Prague to shut down the IMF/World Bank on September 26, 2000 by a member of the Workers Solidarity Movement who marched near the front of the anarchist (blue) section of the demonstration.*

The demonstration formed up around 2km from the Congress Centre in a square in central Prague. A meeting at the Convergence Centre (a large industrial space in the suburbs) of some 3,000 people had taken place the afternoon before to discuss the plan to blockade the Congress. The Czech organisers of the demonstration (INPEG) had decided to allow the delegates into the conference centre and then blockade it in order to prevent them leaving and attending a special Opera that evening.

However at this meeting it became apparent that no plan had been made to shut down the metro station that would be inside the police cordon. It was very obvious that this was how the delegates would be brought in and out (and indeed the media has reported that they were brought out this way). The planned blockade would obviously be ineffective but the INPEG response to questions about the metro was to say that we couldn't shut this down as the ordinary citizens needed to get around.

This led to a meeting of anarchists that evening beside the blue block meeting. We decided that we would head up the blue block and rather than stopping at our appointed blockade point (which would have left us in a vulnerable position between cliffs and a river), we would march as close as we could get to the Congress Centre and then attempt to non-violently push through the police lines. Napoleon said a battle plan never survives first contact with the enemy, as we shall see below.

Heading up the yellow block would be the Italian group, Ya Basta, which had been delayed 24 hours on the border as the police tried to stop four of them coming in because they were on a (FBI) list of people who had attended the Seattle demonstration. In solidarity the 1,000 people with them said either we all get in or we all stay here and proceeded to build barricades on the train lines....

Like the anarchist block, the Italians also intended to try and push through the police lines. They had come prepared with 30 or so suits of padded "armor" and helmets that those in the front would wear to ward off police blows.

There were three major color blocks, blue, yellow and pink each assigned to block the access points at different areas around the conference centre. The centre itself stood at the top of a steep hill overlooking the city and was unapproachable from most angles due to cliffs. In addition we knew we faced 11,000 police with riot equipment, dogs, stun grenades, tear gas and water cannon.

Both yellow and blue were headed up by groups which had stated their intention to push through the police lines. Pink, which had the longest march but much easier access to the centre, seemed to include the pacifists and the bulk of the Leninist parties..

As we gathered in the square it was obvious that the hoped for 20,000 plus protesters would not materialise, however we probably had over 12,000. (In this account I've tried hard to give accurate figures. I've seen one mainstream media report of 15,000 and others as low as 5,000.) The march would be headed by pink, followed by yellow and then blue. As we reached the first point the march would continue and blue would split off and head for the area of the conference centre beside the river. Later the same tactic would see yellow split from the back and take a second route to the centre leaving pink to continue on to encircle the rear of the centre.

### The siege begins

I had chosen to march with the anarchist block that headed up (and indeed comprised the majority of) the blue march. The front of this was taken up by Czech anarchists followed by anarchists from the other Eastern European countries numbering perhaps a thousand in all. Holding the banners down one side of the march and taking position behind the eastern Europeans were anarchists from all the western European countries and a large number of autonomen from Germany. This anarchist block probably numbered at least 3,000 but we may have had as many as 5,000. An exact estimate is difficult as from the front I could never see the back of the block and counting numbers in such a tightly packed formation is difficult. There were also large numbers behind the anarchist block and, of course, at least a thousand anarchists who choose to march with their affinity groups in other sections of the march. This last number could be larger and is based on the number of anarchist flags, badges and other identifying clothes I saw in the other sections.

At the head of the blue section we were to

march in tightly packed rows with our arms linked and banners stretched across the front and down the sides of the march. The majority of those on the march wore masks to protect their identity and offer some limited protection from tear gas. Those at the front also wore construction helmets and many had gas masks. Six or seven rows back a medical team marched also equipped with gas masks and helmets as we didn't expect the police would respect the prominent red crosses marked on their bags and satchels.

I had chosen not to wear a mask and to speak to any press looking for interviews about why we marching today—making it clear it was only my view as we had no agreed press spokespeople. I had spoken at the counter summit over the weekend so this seemed like the most useful contribution that could be made to the debate. This also means I can report on events with more safety than the more active participants.

On that day the WSM and other anarchist groups were also distributing 5,000 copies of an international anarchist statement from a number of anarchist groups around the world. It explained why we were taking part in and supporting the Prague action, and what alternative we had. The full text of this statement which was distributed in a four language leaflet (including Czech) can be found at: <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/inter/s26.html>

One side note worth mentioning is that many of the Leninist parties had chosen to come to Prague with red flags emblazoned with hammer and sickles. The Czech media on the day of the protest had been sure to include front page pictures of them as these flags—associated with the Soviet occupation and the old regime—are hardly popular. As the yellow block formed up in front of us the Eastern European anarchists greeted each of these banners with a chant that obviously translated as "Bolshevism is Fascism!" I didn't join in as apart from the difficulty of chanting in a language you don't know. I don't feel the equation is accurate even if in the context of Eastern Europe it's an understandable reaction.

As the march set off our block chanted a huge range of slogans, many of them in Czech but some also in French, English and Spanish. The most popular included "International Solidarity," "Smash, Smash, Smash the IMF!" and "No Pasaran!" It was quite a feeling being part of this massive block of anarchists with people from every corner of Europe and beyond marching towards what

we knew would be a hard confrontation with the police.

The tactic of the march splitting off from the back worked beautifully, catching the police and media—who were clustered at the front of the march—by surprise. From here to the centre we were unaccompanied by both and we wound our way down into the valley below the conference centre. Once the march split up we jogged for a while and then, in order to avoid breaking our formation, slowed to a fast march trying to get as close to the IMF as we could before the police could react. In particular we were concerned that they could trap us at the bottom of the valley where we needed to take a tunnel under a railway line.

In the event, though, the police failed to react and we got closer and closer to the IMF building. Finally we stood at the bottom of a steep hill sloping up to the centre, 300 metres away at the top we could see riot police behind a fence. On the right a four story building stood on the street, on the left a park opened up in a funnel shape with the wide end being at the top of the hill. We advanced rapidly up the hill and then stopped about 30 metres from the waiting police line. Here we waited for a minute to allow everyone to form up and remove the banners at the side of the march. At this point the non-combatants (including myself) moved into the park. Then the front charged.

### The battle in the park

For the next couple of minutes row after row hurled themselves against the riot shields, before moving to the side as the next row flung themselves forward. The shield wall started to buckle and then break and demonstrators started breaking through to the crest of the hill, perhaps less than 100m from the centre. The police brought up a water cannon and the first hail of stun grenades detonated amongst the front rows. Then the police baton charged forcing those who had scaled the fence to hastily retreat lest they be trapped.

As the baton charge reached the fence it was driven back by a hail of cobblestones and by demonstrators armed with sticks and protected with helmets. More demonstrators charging through the park itself began to scale the wall at the end nearest the Congress or to try and force down the doors in the wall. Other observers indicated that at least some of them succeeded in this and got within 50 metres of the IMF before being driven back by riot police.

Meanwhile at the top of the hill a furious battle was being waged by the anarchists. The police were now firing round after round of tear-gas-filled stun grenades into the massed ranks below them. The water cannon continually hosed from left to right against the front rows. From the park above



The Italian Ya Basta group (in white) confronts the police barricade on a bridge.

the road I could see someone holding a massive anarchist flag in the centre of the row, soaked and deep in tear gas, but refusing to be driven back. A second massive charge began, again driving the police back before being again driven back as the police brought up two armored personnel carriers and counter-charged. Half a dozen or so molotov cocktails were hurled into the police lines which brought them to a halt but had little other effect as they were obviously wearing flame proof suits.

A stalemate developed along the fence with the police driven back whenever they tried to cross it by stick-wielding demonstrators and hails of the now plentiful cobblestones. Volley after volley of stun grenades and tear gas rained down, the noise apparently interrupting the speeches inside the hall. As the battle raged across the fence more and more demonstrators were coming to the rear injured or suffering the effects of the tear gas. In the front lines demonstrators could be seen wearing captured police riot helmets and wielding captured shields and batons.

Meanwhile somewhere above us the front of the yellow march had reached the police lines. The Italian Ya Basta! collectives which headed the yellow march had come prepared to push through the police lines with body armor. There are plenty of reports elsewhere about this. The other real attempt to penetrate the police line was carried out by the pink and silver march which, although weak in numbers, did manage to catch the police by surprise and break through on at

least one occasion. The pink march which was the first out of the square doesn't seem to have made any effort to break through—most of the Leninist groups were in this sector, presumably because they hoped to get their banners on the media by being in the first section to march. This section was probably under strength as the Leninist International Socialists had lied about the number of people they were bringing at the planning meetings. They put themselves down as contributing 2,500 to the pink section but in fact had about 1,000 on the day, which may have contributed to the need for blue to send re-enforcements.

The top of the hill in blue section settled into a furious stalemate. Some protesters tried to find their way to flank the narrow riot police front by going through thickly planted pine trees that ran from it up along the wall of the park. They were driven out as volleys of stun grenades and tear gas were fired into the trees at point blank range. However it appears that further up in the park a group of about 100 succeeded in breaking down a door in the wall and making the first penetration to within 50 metres of the centre before being driven back by riot police with dogs.

On the left the frontal assault on police lines was still going on, but making no progress because of the water cannon. More and more people were streaming back with injuries. A gap opened up between the lines of riot police and the demonstrators as they tried to stay just out of water cannon range, occasionally dashing in to let fly with a volley of cobbles or with paint bombs at the wind-

Photo: Devin Asch



## International Anarchist News

screen of the water cannon in an attempt to blind it.

The riot police moved into this gap and the water cannon inched forward behind them, opening up a gap into which more of the riot police poured. Eventually enough had come through for them to attempt their first mass charge of the day against the people in the park (who were in any case mostly watching rather than participating). As this was expected most people made a hasty retreat to the back of the park and then a rather dangerous scramble down a steep wooded slope. The method being to try and use the tree below you to arrest your decent without colliding with the person who had just likewise bounced off it.

At this point I returned to the intersection at the bottom of the valley to observe that a couple of hundred riot police had formed up down the other side street. While the battle was still going on around the corner on the road up to the hill I remained at the intersection below watching events unfolding there.

Initially the only thing in front of this second squad of riot police was 100 or so people sitting on the road. There was an obvious danger that if they charged those still fighting on the hill would be cut off. Some demonstrators started to tear down signs and trees in the park and to construct a barricade in front of those sitting down. Others meanwhile stood in a line facing the riot police but without moving towards them.

In the meantime a concrete train had arrived on the railway line running parallel with and indeed forming a wall along the park at the bottom of the valley. This was somehow stopped and a number of demonstrators climbed onto it and de-coupled the carriages, effectively blocking one side of the railway line.

Back at the intersection a river of water had started to run from the hill around the corner where the constant detonation of stun grenades and the occasional billow of tear gas confirmed that the furious battle was still ongoing. On the side street the barricade was rising and indeed a further barricade was being constructed on the road through the park that both roads connected with. Out the front of the first barricade a couple of demonstrators stood waving anarchist flags and even bits of police riot equipment at the police lines. The windows of what looked like a bank or insurance office behind the barricade were put in and demonstrators climbed in and started passing out more barricade material.

Meanwhile in the park at the bottom of the hill the medical teams were performing first aid on head wounds, and obviously broken fingers and even arms. I heard one person being advised to head for a hospital. Of a less serious nature there was a stream of people who had been in the centre of tear gas bursts and thus needed their eyes



Tear gas envelopes demonstrators.

washed out with water. One of the blue column medics has left comments on the indymedia site that I would be inclined to agree with to the effect that one of the most remarkable things was the discipline and co-operation of these anarchists who had come from all over Europe and beyond. But the role of the medics was heroic in particular as it was obvious the police had singled them out for special treatment. I talked to one medic who when helping a local 50 year old resident who had been hit by tear gas had been repeatedly blasted by the watercannon as he sought to aid the old man. More disturbingly still he reported that an ambulance had refused to take the old man to hospital.

During the weekend demonstrations plain clothes secret policemen were pointed out to me in the various demonstrations. Once they were pointed out they were quite obvious by their dress alone. While in the park I observed a group of three of them standing at the back of the demonstrators being driven off by a group of activists who had spotted them. Later the papers were to publish photos of more of these characters, dressed like demonstrators (including raggy balaclavas) arresting people. Rumors from other sections insisted that some more of these characters had actually initiated property destruction at other "quiet" sections that day. I've no idea of the truth of this but they were very obviously present.

The barricade in the side street was set on fire to hold back the riot police. Meanwhile news came through that one of the gates in the pink sector had not been blockaded and

re-enforcements were requested to block it. This would involve a long and somewhat vulnerable journey down the side of the conference centre between a cliff and the river.

The black clad anarchist samba band formed up and led about 300 people off to attempt this blockade. This caused some dissension as some of those remaining felt that everyone should stay where we were and defend the existing barricades. Shortly after they left the front of the water cannon finally showed itself around the corner at the bottom of the hill. It had taken maybe two hours for the riot police to drive the demonstrators 200m down a steep hill. Now however they had reached the wide open park at the bottom where the railway line and cliff acted to form a funnel with our line of retreat at the narrow end. As hundreds of riot police formed up at the wide end we began a slow retreat that threatened to turn into a rout when they charged, as no one fancied being caught in the jam that might form in the narrow end of the funnel. As the charge was also coming diagonally at the railway line those of us at this side feared being trapped against it.

In the event, after a brief panic a lot of people slowed again to a walk although in my opinion it was at this point that up to a thousand people decided they had enough and left for the city centre. Once the narrow end of the park was reached the task of constructing barricades was again resumed. I decided to move down to the blockade of the road by the river, in part in the hope of

getting some food as I hadn't eaten that day.

This wasn't possible as all the shops in sight were shut and I didn't fancy going past the twenty or so cops visible about 300m down the road back into town in order to find an open one. Numbers had very visibly thinned, about 100 people mounted a half hearted blockade on the road and built a barricade of sorts across it. At one point a group wheeled a car down to this which as it lacked two tires looked like it might have been abandoned. They wanted to turn it over onto its roof but others disagreed—arguing it was almost as effective upright and that way the owner could recover it only slightly damaged. In the end it stayed upright and later as we were forced to abandon the area, someone sprayed "sorry" on the windscreen.

After resting here for a while I headed back to where the sound of grenade detonations and a thick pall of smoke told me the action was continuing. I was heading up towards the park on the inside of the railway line but a small group coming the opposite direction warned us there was nothing but burning barricades and hundreds of riot police that way. I headed back to the intersection at the railway bridge just as about a hundred people came charging down the other side of the railway line.

In turned out that somewhere two junctions up the riot police had just stormed another barricade and this group had been fleeing back from there. At the next intersection up just 150m away we could see a group of 100 or so hurriedly constructing a new barricade, this time using advertising boards that had been torn off walls....

The group had a hurried discussion about what to do next. It was obvious that the area was being pushed in and they were being driven towards the river. News came through that the blockade had been broken elsewhere (It was now about 3.30 PM, I suspect this story was false or related to the small break in the pink sector that was still open). Most people wanted to re-group and head

into town before they were sealed in. The discussion broke up when a limousine suddenly appeared less than 50m away in a side street. About 50 people charged it and, as it hurriedly reversed back the way it had come, threw cobbles at it and hit it with sticks. Then the debate resumed.

They decided to first try and find the section of the blue group that had headed off with the samba band down the river as they feared

otherwise they would be cut off once the riot police hit the river. A cyclist headed up to the burning barricade to tell those there that they were withdrawing and they set off down to the group at the river. A steady drift of people had been heading into town throughout this period so less than 200 started on the long march down between the river and the cliff.

The IMF Congress Centre stood on top of the high cliff to our left, on the site of an old fortress. To our right was the river and ahead the road passed through a rock archway that ran to the river. As we neared the arch we could see two figures standing directly on top of it, perhaps 100m above us. Those at the front started a chant of "Jump, Jump!" first in English and then in Czech as it was realised the two figures were riot cops, put there in case anyone tried to scale the sheer rock face. Above us a police helicopter circled, presumably reporting our position to those on the ground.

The barricade behind us meant that the road was clear of traffic, with only one or two groups of locals watching us as we walked past. After about 1500m we reached a fork that turned up the hill to the right, towards the Congress Centre and into a residential area. The streets here were quiet, the weather fine and sunny and before long we came across an open supermarket where people stocked up on food and water. The water I had brought to wash tear gas from eyes was by now finished, the hot weather made all this marching around thirsty work.

Our little column continued up the hill. We were now clearly in the sector assigned to pink but as yet we had not come across any other protesters. Finally, up the hill ahead of us, we spied another small group just beyond a series of residential tower blocks. The presence of blue flags confirmed that we had found at least some of those we were looking for. As we approached the entrance to the residential blocks (a side street running up the hill) a number of fancy cars suddenly



IMF delegates peer at the fighting from the Congress Centre windows.

## International Anarchist News

accelerated out and shot down a side street. In retrospect, these were almost certainly delegates making their getaway through the last unblocked entrance.

### Visiting the Congress

I was too exhausted to pay much attention to what was going on at this point and collapsed under a tree. A guy appeared on a bike and told everyone that the road that went up behind the tower blocks was the last unblocked entrance to the IMF Congress. Somewhat reluctantly I followed the little band, once more led by the Samba band, up the road. At this stage I figured the wisest thing was to get out before the police went on a rampage, in particular as I considered the dwindling band had little chance of breaking through police lines. How wrong I was!

After about 200m the road reached a ridge on the hill and headed straight for the Congress Centre. This was my first clear view of it, this time more or less on the same level and not up some impossible hill. It was 200m away. What's more, all that lay between us and the centre was a single line of police barricades on the other side of an intersection 100m away. This amazed me as we were still being followed by the helicopter. From later interviews published with the police it seems the mass assault had disoriented them and their command structure had broken down a little. They were to actually blame this on someone managing to jam their radio communications! I suspect the real reason was panic.

The sight of that narrow line of cops in front of the centre was enough to get the remaining 150 or so masked up people to charge the thin police line. They stood and watched for all of two seconds and then turned and ran, right back to the centre, around the corner and out of sight. Knowing that a massive counter attack was inevitable I walked only a little beyond the intersection.

Those at the front reached the centre itself, and proceeded to lob cobblestones at the building and at the delegates watching from the balconies above....

Behind me, someone at the intersection yelled "Quick, police, come back!" I returned to the intersection and sure enough a couple of hundred riot police were jogging towards us. Those at the hotel started to sprint back down the street and I wasn't long in joining them. As I looked over my shoul-



der I saw a water cannon come zooming around the corner by the hotel accompanied by hundreds more riot police. At the end of the street they joined the riot police we'd seen jogging up the side street and yet another water cannon.

One big disadvantage that the riot police have is that because of all their armor they can't run for very long or very fast. All day long people had been running back 50m which was enough to open a small gap and then stopping to see if the police were still chasing. And people behind the front had been digging up cobble stones and leaving them in piles at these intervals so the police could be discouraged from continuing the chase. This sort of tactic prevented the police routing us early in the day. So when we rounded the corner and reached the top of a very long very steep grassy back that ran down by the tower blocks to the road we had originally come up we paused. Less than 50m away the water cannon and all the riot police were pouring around the corner.

I charged down the path that zig-zagged down the bank with everyone else. Once the riot police gained the top of the hill above us they proceeded to lob stun grenades and fire tear gas down at us as we scrambled down the slope. We made it the bottom and looked around for the next place to run. Some people didn't wait and just headed straight down a street that ran directly away from the building.

Once things had calmed down we headed back to the intersection that led up to the side road to the centre. Hundreds of riot police were still visible up this road so we decided to keep moving. At the next intersection we met up with some more missing sections of the blue block, and collectively decided that we should get the hell out of the area before the riot cops came down after us. As we moved up the hill we finally met up with some of the pink sector and I chatted with some people I had met at the counter summit about the days events so far. Moving on we came across the first pink section action, a non-violent blockade on the divided highway that passed the centre. The bridge that Ya Basta had tried to force their way across was the same highway at the opposite side of the centre.

There was a tense moment as our segment of the blue block arrived, mostly masked up, flying anarchist flags and many carrying cobble stones. The pacifist blockade were obviously not keen on this element breaking up the friendly atmosphere they had generated with the police. At our approach they started up a chant of "Please Sit Down—No Violence!" A few of the more hot-headed types on the blue side threw a couple of cobble stones over the heads of the pacifists sitting on the road at the line of robo cops beyond. Fortunately, they were quickly restrained by the cooler heads in the

blue block before the police could use this as an excuse to charge.

A row broke out between a couple of the crazier blue elements and the leaders of the pink pacifists sitting on the road. They seemed to consist of a scattering of Leninists at the back and a lot of very young Swedes at the front. I thought it was a bit out of order to embroil them in a violent confrontation they didn't want and as I was completely exhausted I decided to sit down with them, at least for a while.

Although things remained tense for a while, no more projectiles were thrown. The tensest moment was probably when some twit in the pacifist mob started a group singing "Give Peace a Chance"—I felt sure this would provoke a reaction from people who had been getting battered by tear gas, stun grenades, truncheons and dogs for several hours. But luckily they stopped and began to sing something more soothing. Some of the rowdier blue elements moved off out of sight to the right while the anarchist flags stayed back down the road a bit. The pacifists kept up the chants of "No Violence—Please Sit Down!" for a bit longer but eventually seemed happy enough that the immediate threat had moved on.

Something was obviously going on out of sight to the right as the same chants were heard and then a big squad of riot police went sprinting out from behind the barrier to return a couple of minutes later.

I stayed with the pacifist protest for half an hour or so, in part because the police suddenly brought up a water cannon and switched the white helmeted riot police in the front row for a bunch of identical robo cops clad in black helmets. I guessed at that time these black helmets were some sort of heavy squad and figured I'd stay around and if necessary get arrested here if they waded into the pacifists.

The leaders of the pacifist pink section went forward to talk to some of the leaders of the riot police. He then announced there was to be an affinity meeting to one side and that each affinity group should send its "spoke" (delegate) over to it. The cops relaxed a little and resumed a standby look rather than the about-to-charge one they had a few minutes earlier. Then the black helmeted cops were taken out and replaced with the white helmeted ones. At this point the pacifists actually started a round of applause—I'm forced to assume this was for the riot cops! Amazingly the constant sound of stun grenades and the clouds of tear gas coming from the other sectors still left them in a cop friendly mode.

Later, I found out that at one point there were negotiations with one of the blockades to allow the catering and other workers out of the centre. I guess this was what I saw but I headed off at this point as all the clapping had convinced me that these were not really

the people I wanted to get arrested with.

Subsequently I have discovered that the episode above has become quite controversial with a claim that the blue block had thrown cobble stones over the heads of the pacifists (who were Norwegians and not Swedes) in an effort to get the police to attack them. There is very little truth in this claim, as related above. The blue section in fact was fairly disciplined and stopped the hot-heads from attacking. However I suppose the people sitting on the road just saw the blue block appear from nowhere and didn't realise the manic state of some of the participants was due to the events they had gone through in the minutes before they arrived.

It was also around this point that the story began to circulate that the police had told the delegates that the night at the opera was canceled as they could not guarantee their protection in the city centre. As the stated objective of the blockade had been to stop this opera we had succeeded. Not, as it happens, by a non-violent sit-down—the delegates would have gotten out underground on the metro, but by wearing the police down.

As I continued on my long march around the centre I caught up with the blue block once more. This time they were fighting a pitched battle on a side road that ran off a major road with a tram line. Numbers had again grown to perhaps 300 but it still seemed like a foolishly small number to be taking on 11,000 riot police.

On the other side of the main road a large number of Czechs were watching the riot in progress. Suddenly, somewhere down the road from me, a car deliberately swerved into a group of protesters by the side of the road. This may possibly have been an attack by a fascist—they had been hanging around looking for victims all weekend. Whatever the cause, the results were interesting. The Czechs at the other side of the road all started shouting and pointing out the offending car. This enabled a small group prising up cobble stones further up the street to stone the car as it sped away.

After this, protesters tore up the long railings that separated the road from the pavement and moved them to block off the road itself. At this stage I saw a "pathological" pacifist giving an interview in English (from the accent he was from the US) to a TV crew about how all these rioters had nothing to do with the protests—a line that was to be repeated by some of the INPEP organisers afterwards. Meanwhile a couple of hundred metres away a few hundred of these rioters, who had presumably sprouted overnight from the ground continued the running battle with the police.

At this stage night was beginning to fall and there was a clear feeling we should lift the blockade and get into town before the



The pink samba band on the march.

Photo: Undercurrents

inevitable police riot broke out. The anarchist Samba band re-appeared and just about everyone started to fall in behind them. Something interesting happened at this point because the numbers that marched into the city centre rapidly grew to about 2,000 or so again with all the visible flags and banners being anarchist ones.

Leaving the barricades in place we marched into the centre in one big column. The samba band played (very well) at the front and this—combined with the car-free streets—turned the whole march into a victory carnival. As we went past the residential buildings on either side of the streets people came out on their balconies to watch this strange procession and quite a few people waved at us. My exhaustion lifted, suddenly it felt like we were in control of the streets and indeed we were—except for the ever-present helicopter, not a single cop was visible for the entire march.

As darkness fell, a fire-breather started up somewhere near the front of the march and the band slipped into an easy rhythm. In the breaks the crowd punched one fist into the air and shouted "Hey!" As we came upon stalled trams the drivers rang their bells in greeting. It all came to resemble something out of an Eisenstein film. At the sides of the march masked individuals demolished the windows of banks as we passed them, but overall the day-long spirit of confrontation had faded into the joy of victory.

In fact we were a little premature—we had forgotten about the plan to march on the exhibition centre. But in the event, another

section of the blue block that had earlier left for the Opera was to do this and result in it also being shut down.

## Wenceslas Square

After a long march we arrived at the top of Wenceslas Square where a McDonalds was swiftly trashed by some at the front of the march. [These might have been the work of undercover cops to provide an excuse for the later police riot—this was later suggested by some Czech newspapers.] There was a brief retreat when some police charged up the square. This quickly turned into a counter-charge when it was realised there were only twenty of them. People flocked into the square, and mingled with the Czechs, tourists and other demonstrators that were already there. At the top of the square the terrace of the National Museum was packed with people who had turned out to watch.

Some time after we had arrived a new march of a few hundred arrived on the streets leading to the top of the square. This initially received a cheer until it was realised that those at the front were chanting "No Violence." It had obviously come all this way from the pink blockade to police the rest of us. They were generally ignored and I was amused to see the same US "pathological" pacifist I had seen talking to the TV crew back at the last blockade making a big show of standing in front of the McDonalds as if he was protecting it—a pointless exercise as there was little left to protect and no one to protect it from—unless, that is, you count the

camera crew which was filming him.

I'd decided it was time to go home and started to head down the square to the metro station at the bottom. As mentioned above we had forgotten about the exhibition centre but as it turned out the police were so panicked that the arrival of a mere 200 anarchists caused them to cancel it. Apparently the majority of hospitalised delegates were actually suffering from the effects of stuffing themselves with a pork feast, closely followed by the panic of being crammed onto coaches and driven past the lines of demonstrators. The IMF and Czech police humiliation had been completed by this last 200. When the police realised how few of them there were they chased them all the way back into the city centre.

Meanwhile we reached the half-way point in the square and suddenly noticed hundreds of white helmets pouring into the bottom of the square and starting the long charge towards the top. The long expected police riot was now materialising. With the delegates back in their hotels, the police were determined to arrest and batter anyone they could in an act of revenge. We decided to head for the top of the square and then out by whatever road was possible.

We retreated. Fortunately we had enough of a lead on the wave of riot police to do so calmly. We passed the pacifist block which stood in front of the museum still chanting "No Violence!" As I passed I told those at the edges that the riot police were on their way and they would be wise to get the hell out of there fast. For this advice I just received some perplexed and hostile stares and as I wasn't about to hang around to argue the point I headed on.

A couple of hundred metres down the road I looked back into the square just as a huge salvo of tear gas and stun grenades rained down on the front of the National Museum, right where the pacifists and hundreds of Czechs had been standing. A Czech I was with commented that this was the first time the National Museum had come under first since the Russian invasion of 1968. It was definitely time to go home!

The next day the IMF meetings were almost empty, photos show speakers addressing halls that should have had thousands of delegates in them with only a dozen or so present. Then they announced the cancellation of the last day's meetings. A World Bank delegate reports "During the press conference the next day, they denied the protests were the reason. They actually said the reason was that things had run so efficiently that they were able to compress everything into two days. The press laughed at this." Prague was clearly our victory and we should remember it as one!

—Joe Black

The Workers Solidarity Movement web site can be found at: <http://more.at/anarchism>